Social constructions of environmental quality and opportunities for enterprise in rural Scotland

Thesis

SOCIAL CONSTRUCTIONS OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR ENTERPRISE IN RURAL SCOTLAND

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ABSTRACT

Social Constructions of Environmental Quality

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Opportunities for Enterprise in Rural Scotland

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Environmental values are inherently subjective, yet in the past objective approaches to valuing the environment have dominated. Many scientific approaches to evaluating the quality of the environment have been developed, but they fail to capture the diversity and richness of wider public perceptions of the 'natural' environment, and as such they cannot claim to fully represent the values of 'ordinary people'. The development of 'social indicators' of environmental quality offers an alternative to the scientific approach. It appears that environmental value hinges on 'use value': the ability of the environment to satisfy the particular use that the individual makes of it. This approach allows a far richer understanding of concepts of 'value' in environments. Yet while we increasingly 'value' rural places and environments, rural communities are finding themselves under increasing pressure to remain viable: in modern parlance they are often described as being 'unsustainable'. Efforts to improve this situation have focused on the stimulation of rural enterprise. This study aims to investigate the actions and motivations of 'environmental entrepreneurs' in rural areas. A model of environmental enterprise is developed and explored. It appears that certain rural businesses are highly reliant on the quality of the environment in which they are located, as perceived by their market. Such businesses incorporate perceptions of 'the rural' and 'the natural' into various aspects of the entrepreneurial process: marketing and advertising, production processes and experiential setting, for example. The model suggests that such businesses are ideally suited to post-modern forms of business, engaged as they are in the production of environmental symbols and concludes that such forms of enterprise are likely to continue to flourish, while remaining susceptible to external influences on public perceptions of rural environmental quality.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

This thesis will critically examine the phenomenon of rural enterprise and aims to provide an original insight into the subject through an exploration of the activities of rural entrepreneurs. Specifically, the relationship between environmental quality and rural enterprise will be examined, at a number of levels. The continuing depopulation of certain rural areas, the ongoing crisis in farming and other sectors of primary production, as well as the changing nature of wider attitudes towards 'the rural' leaves many rural areas 'close to the edge' in terms of their viability as living communities. The establishment of new businesses, and associated employment and wealth creation opportunities, is seen as one of the most promising tools to break the cycle of rural decline and depopulation. In order to develop policies and practices which increase the successful establishment of new rural enterprises, and to benefit from the associated creation of wealth and employment opportunities, a good understanding of the social and individual processes underlying the phenomenon that is rural entrepreneurship, is needed. Despite the observation that entrepreneurship is essentially a socially constituted action, much research on the subject has focused on the individual entrepreneur. This study, conversely, aims to examine the process of rural enterprise in its social context: it aims to explore, and explain, the relationship between rural entrepreneurs and their rural environment. Initially, public perceptions of environmental value will be explored through the adoption of a social constructionist approach, similar to that suggested by Halfacree (1993) in the context of 'rurality'. The insights developed through this exercise will be used to inform an in-depth exploration of rural enterprise in context, with specific reference to the relationship between entrepreneurial action and perceived environmental quality. In particular, the commodification of environmental values by rural entrepreneurs will be examined in the context of post-structuralist theories about symbol, image and the commercialisation of nature.

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'consume rurality'. The form that this consumption takes is many and varied, ranging from the tangible to the highly intangible. The idea of 'rural consumption' focuses our minds on the existence of potential 'rural consumers'. Thus the connection between societal valuing of rural spaces and all things 'country' to rural enterprise is clear: people value 'the rural' and as a result entrepreneurs can exploit these intangible values through their ability to provide opportunities to consume rurality. The form of the enterprise is inherently variable, ranging from outdoor recreational pursuits and all the paraphernalia these entail to more passive consumption of scenery, and, importantly, opportunities to service the rural consumers. Many authors have observed that such markets exist widely in rural areas, and that, in many ways, they may underpin existing rural economies (Keeble et. al. 1992; Bryden & Bollman 2000; Bryden & Munro 2001). Furthermore, as traditional employment and wealth creation opportunities dwindle, they appear to be of increasing importance.

The ways in which rural entrepreneurs are actually able to recognise and exploit these new markets is a relatively unexplored area of research. This study aims to explore the above issues in more depth, and to provide an account of *how* and *why* rural entrepreneurs make use of intangible sources of value present in such environments. Entrepreneurship has been described as "the creative extraction of value from environments" (Scott, Fadahunsi & Kodithuwakku 1997: 6). The aim here is to examine how and why this particular form of 'creative extraction' takes place, in the context of rural enterprise.

1.2.2 Why High Quality 'Natural' Environments?

The conventional meaning of the 'entrepreneurial environment' refers to 'the totality of the surroundings in which an entrepreneur operates' that would include the social, physical and – particularly – the economic or financial influences (Curran 1989). Certainly, most entrepreneurship research has, in the past, fallen under the auspices of management and business studies – hence the emphasis on economic, rather than social, issues. This study takes an entirely different perspective on this issue. Although the implications of this will be discussed at some length in chapter 3, it is important to establish at the outset why this approach has been taken.

The contested nature of the meaning of 'environment' has become increasingly apparent. The influence of the 'environmental movement' and increasing public concern about the quality of the environment means that many people now associate specific issues and ideas with 'the

environment'. Rather than simply referring to 'the totality of everything that surrounds the subject', the 'environment' has, for some, come to be synonymous with 'the natural world' or 'nature' or 'The Environment' (Barry 1999). Thus, 'environmental problems' are seen to be those that affect the natural world: pollution, waste disposal, species extinction, habitat loss, global warming, rainforest destruction, for example, are all seen as 'environmental issues'. Similarly, 'environmental education' programmes teach us to care for and value 'the natural world'. Within this general expansion of environmentalism, it is obvious that certain 'environments' are widely considered to be 'more valuable', or to be of 'higher quality' than others. From SSSIs to World Heritage Sites, places that have been deemed to be highly 'valuable' or of 'high quality' are protected through legislation, frequently to prevent their despoliation by economic development.

Importantly, in the context of this research, these 'environmental values' tie in strongly with the idea of 'rurality': the idea of the 'rural idyll' is as strong today as it ever has been (Halfacree 1995) and rural areas are generally acknowledged to be 'valued spaces'. Anderson suggests that the connection between rurality and the 'natural world' lies in the perception of "rurality [as] a reservoir of the natural" (2000: 140). This is certainly true of the study area, as is borne out in the research proper.

The literature suggests that these somewhat intangible environmental values, inherent in rural spaces, are ripe for exploitation by those who have the ability to do so. Bryden & Bollman, for example, describing the physical and cultural characteristics of such valued environments as 'public goods', point out that they are "critical resources in creating indirect trading activities, for example, they underpin the development of tourism and recreation, and the perceived desirability of rural living" (2000: 193). Yet, from the perspective of entrepreneurship studies, it appears that the process by which rural entrepreneurs actually make use of changing values and perceptions of the rural environment goes deeper than a simple reliance on tourism, or their own desire to live a rural lifestyle. Not only are we concerned with consumption *in* the countryside, we are also focusing on commodification *of* the countryside – and rural entrepreneurs are those individuals who are capable of packaging such intangible resources in forms that are 'ready for consumption' in various ways.

The subject of environmental values, and associated attempts to 'value' the environment, attracts heated debate in academic circles, particularly since the advent of 'environmental economics', and attempts to ascribe monetary values to what are essentially public goods (Turner, Pearce & Bateman 1994). The conceptual difference arises between two viewpoints: one which contends that the 'value' of 'the environment' lies in its 'usefulness' to man – its instrumental or 'utility' value, and another which holds that the non-human environment is intrinsically or inherently 'valuable', irrespective of its utility to man – 'intrinsic' value. Pratt, Howarth & Brady (2000) point out that there is a shift in the meaning of the term 'value' here: for the latter group, 'value' takes the form of a noun, for the former it is a verb. Thus, as Pratt *et. al.* put it, "if we use the noun, we expect the thing we might find. The verb suggests activities we might engage in, or relationships we might forge" (ibid: 67). An 'environmental value' is a 'thing', albeit intangible and highly contested. 'Valuing', on the other hand is a *process*. This process of 'environmental enterprise' which forms the main subject of this study provides an excellent example of the shift between 'value' and 'valuing', from noun to verb. The entrepreneurial element emerges from the ability of certain individuals to profit from this shift.

The commercialisation of the environmental movement, and the 'socially desirable' nature of 'green' or 'rural' products that project a particular image is, in many ways, a classic manifestation of post-modernism theories. Essentially, "post-modernists are anti-foundationalists... objectivity gives way to relativism" (May 1997: 16). This particular perspective has implications for the practice of social research (if there are no absolutes, how can ideas such as 'truth' or 'knowledge' be justified or defended?). In the context of this study these issues are particularly important. If rurality, or 'the environment' can be identified as socially constructed phenomena, and if there are no 'absolutes' by which they can be defined, the relationship between image, commodity and culture becomes indefinable in any objective manner. For example, Benton points out, "inasmuch as products have a function, they are an image" (1995: 13). And image itself can be highly deceptive: "what you see is not *just* what you get" (ibid: 12). Thus, post-structuralist theories may provide a way to critically examine the process of rural or environmental entrepreneurship described above, by which quite intangible values are commodified and sold. This provides the justification for focusing our efforts on the examination of 'high quality (natural) environments'. These 'special places' are highly valued by society for a variety of complex, subjective and often highly personal reasons, and as such they

provide a resource for the exploitation of such values. For these reasons, it makes sense to focus this investigation of environmental enterprise on the places that such phenomena occur.

1.3 Research Questions

The Research Questions being examined in this current study can be summarised as follows:

1. How are public perceptions of environmental quality socially constructed, and what are the important criteria used to evaluate environmental quality?
2. How is the process of rural enterprise influenced by the entrepreneurs' perception of the quality of the environment in which he or she is located?

Figure 1.1 outlines the development of the research questions, from general areas of interest and broad observations, through the researchable questions.

Essentially, the former question seeks to explore the differences between public and professional approaches to evaluating the quality of the environment, and to identify the features that characterise a 'high quality 'natural' environment' for non-professionals. The latter question seeks to link socially constructed notions of environmental quality with the actions (business location choices, products and services, marketing strategies) of rural entrepreneurs, and to explore the phenomenon of enterprise in the rural milieu.

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1.4 Summary and Outline of the Research

This research is original in that it will investigate the relationship between perceived environmental quality and rural enterprise using a post-structuralist framework, which emphasises the importance of human values and perceptions in social research theory and practice.

Chapter 2 presents an account of the ontological and epistemological approach being adopted in this research, in order to establish the philosophical perspective that underpins the whole study. The structure and content of the literature review will also be outlined. Specifically, the importance of developing a certain level of 'pre-understanding' will be emphasised, as part and parcel of the research process itself.

Chapters 3 and 4 comprise the literature review itself. The former discusses perceived environmental quality, and focuses on on-going attempts to move 'evaluation' activities away from the scientific hegemony and towards a representation of the views of 'ordinary people'. The divergence between the two perspectives ('professional' and 'public') is made clear. Environmental values are discussed, from the apparent 'valuing' of certain types of environment ('wilderness', 'countryside') over others (urban, man-made), to the popularisation and commercialisation of the 'Environment' by the environmental movement. The aim is to explore the existence of certain 'environmental values' and to examine the transformation of intangible values into tangible 'signs, symbols and images', in the context of post-modern theories. Chapter 4 examines the current 'crisis' in the rural economy, focusing on changing circumstances of employment and business. The importance of small business in both the rural and urban economy is established, not least as a provider of employment, and the association between in-migrancy to the countryside and rates of business start up is made clear. The rural entrepreneurship literature, such as it is, is reviewed to identify what areas of research have been explored to date, and to emphasise the need to develop context-specific theories relating to the motivations and actions of rural entrepreneurs.

Chapter 5 outlines the methodology to be used in each stage of the research. Essentially, qualitative techniques are the main tools in this research. They are more sympathetic to the subjects of the research (rural entrepreneurs) and more appropriate in the context of theory generation. A quantitative exercise is used as a way to test the validity of the theories that have

been built through the grounded theory techniques. The chapter will justify the choice and structure of the research methodology. In line with the reflexive approach being adopted in this study as a whole, a series of critical reflections on the research process are included, which outline the problems and challenges encountered in the field, and details of how these were overcome or otherwise accounted for.

Chapters 6, 7 and 8 report and discuss the analysis of the data for each stage of the research process. Chapter 6 reports the results from the investigation of perceived environmental quality among the public. The aim is to establish: on what basis do people (as opposed to 'professionals') evaluate the quality of the environment, and to try and uncover any abstract themes which explain the variation in how different people perceive the value or quality of the environment? Specifically, respondents are questioned about their perceptions of what constitutes a 'high quality rural / natural' environment, the aim being to establish how and if the understandings of 'ordinary people' vary in any way from those of 'environmental professionals. We also attempt to identify 'signifiers' of environmental quality: widespread ideas and notions that are tied into overall perceptions of environmental quality. Chapter 7, building on the understanding developed in Chapter 6, goes on to examine in more detail how perceived environmental quality relates to the actions of entrepreneurs in the study area. The respondent group, and the area in which they live and work, is described in some detail. The purpose is twofold: firstly, to establish the ecological validity of the sample in the context of the wider region, and secondly, to develop some insights into the 'world' of the respondents, which is likely to be important in developing grounded theories about what they do, how they do it and why. The aim is to identify the relationship between perceived environmental quality and the actions of rural entrepreneurs, in terms of their business forms and decisions. Specifically, the idea of commodification of intangible environmental values by certain rural entrepreneurs, and the use of 'high quality environments' as a resource, is explored, focusing on the opportunities presented by the existence of the 'signifiers' of environmental quality identified in the previous chapter. Chapter 8 attempts to test the explanatory categories and theories developed in chapter 7, using a quantitative approach. The aim is to triangulate the data, thereby strengthening the validity of the explanatory theories that have been developed.

Chapter 9 draws all the various strands of the research together, to provide a comprehensive picture of the research as a whole. A model of rural enterprise, in relation to perceived

environmental quality will be presented, which summarises and conceptualises the findings of Chapters 6-8. This chapter also discusses some of the other influential issues which arose in the course of the research, but which really lay outside the boundaries of the research area considered here. The contribution of the thesis as 'original' research is made clear, and the implications of the findings are discussed. Finally, the chapter ends with some suggestions for further research.

CHAPTER 2

The Theoretical Perspective of the Research and Guide to the Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to outline the philosophical perspective from which the research has been carried out. This is important because the epistemological (theory of knowledge) and ontological (philosophy of thought) beliefs of a researcher can have a major influence on how a certain piece of research will be carried out, and the way in which a particular research question will be developed and tackled. Essentially, there are two main aims in this chapter. Firstly, the ontological and epistemological position of the researcher will be outlined, in order to make the reader aware of the 'tools' in the philosophical 'tool kit', so to speak. Secondly, a guide to the literature review, which follows in subsequent chapters, is provided. The literature review in this case amounts to more than a simple recording of research carried out to date in the subjects of interest. Rather, the function of the literature review is to build a critical appreciation of the context in which the research will be carried out. – something deeper than simple 'scene setting'. The literature review aims to contribute meaningfully to the development of the research process, and to inform the subsequent building of theory, generated from the data, through the development of a certain level of 'pre-understanding' on the part of the researcher.

2.2 Ontological and Epistemological Perspectives – the philosophical 'tool kit'

2.2.1 Theory and Practice in Social Research

Before proceeding to discuss and compare some of the many influential traditions in social research, it is necessary to consider the relationship between the theory and practice of the art of social research. Bryman (2001) points out that the practicalities of social research cannot be

isolated from the "various intellectual allegiances their practitioners hold" (ibid: 4). The reasons given for this are two-fold. Firstly, methodological choices and issues are closely related to the vision of social reality held by the researcher, and secondly, the practice of social research may well connect with some 'bigger' social issue, from practical social problems to theories themselves. In tune with the generally reflexive nature of this study, it is important that one's colours are 'nailed to the mast', so to speak, in order that the reader can make informed judgements about the work in the context of the specific theoretical orientation which informs the research itself. As May (1997) points out, "social theory should fall under our gaze in order that its own presuppositions are open to scrutiny" (1997: 27). Accusations of 'subjectivity' are often levelled at social researchers, especially those working with qualitative methodologies. One way to counter such criticisms is to lay bare both the research process and the underlying philosophical perspective of the research practitioner, in order that the research itself can be scrutinised by the reader in the appropriate context.

May summarises the important relationship between social theory and the practice of social research as follows:

> "Social theory informs our thinking which, in turn, assists us in making research decisions and sense of the world around us. Our experience of doing research and its findings, in its turn, influences our theorising: there is a constant relationship that exists between social research and social theory. The issue for us as researchers is not simply *what* we produce, but *how* we produce it. An understanding of the relationship between theory and research is part of this reflexive project which focuses upon our abilities not only to apply techniques of data collection, but also to consider the nature and presuppositions of the research process in order that we can sharpen out insights into the practice and place of social research in contemporary society."
>
> (1997: 28)

Bryman suggests two ways in which the word 'theory' is understood by researchers. Firstly, it is often intended as a reference to the background literature in a particular area of study. Although 'fact-finding', literature-based research is often dismissed as 'naïve empiricism', this is not necessarily always the case. In certain cases, literature can act as a "proxy for theory... theory is

latent or implicit in the literature" (2001: 8). Indeed, to a certain extent this is the case in this current research. An extensive review of the diverse literature in the fields of environmental philosophy and entrepreneurial research throws up certain problematic issues from which develop the 'research questions', the intellectual puzzles which guide both the design and the progression of the research proper, not least the apparent opposition of 'environmentalism' and entrepreneurialism'. As will be discussed below this development of 'pre-understanding' ensures that the research itself, the collection and analysis of data, is geared directly towards answering the questions that arise from this interrogation of the literature. The other type of 'theory' identified by Bryman comprises *deductive* and *inductive* theory. Of these two, the former describes what is probably the most widely held understanding of the relationship between theory and research: the researcher articulates a hypothesis which he or she then attempts to test through the research process. At the 'end' of a period of experimentation, the results indicate whether the hypothesis should be confirmed or rejected, and the original theory revised as necessary. Despite the widespread use of this approach in quantitative research, both in the natural sciences and in the study of "the science of society" (May 1997: 32), this approach – described by Henwood & Pidgeon as the "hypothetico-deductive mode" (1992: 19) – it is not one that is appropriate for this current study, as will be discussed below. The latter approach, of *induction*, does however sit well within the naturalistic paradigm of this study. Essentially, induction is the reverse of deduction: it aims to *build theory* from research, to develop ideas and theories that explain what we observe in our studies of society. Thus the idea of *inductive theory building* is an important concept for the purposes of exploratory research. This is particularly the case in social research: frequently, the subjects of phenomena under observation produce data which is of interest to the social researcher, but which lacks any theoretical framework. As May (1997: 30) points out, "our findings on the social world are devoid of meaning until situated within a theoretical framework". The aim of an inductive approach is to work towards building this 'theoretical framework' within which we can which explain our observations. Deductivism, on the other hand, would assume the pre-existence of the theory, and use the research data to corroborate, modify or reject the hypothesis.

Inductivism, and deductivism, then, can be seen as two different and opposing perspectives on the relationship between theory and practice. *Grounded theory*, the research methodology used in this current study, is based on a largely inductive approach, the aim being to build explanatory theories from the analysis of qualitative data. Yet there is an important element of deduction here too: in

order to test the developing themes and explanatory categories derived from the analysis of primary data, sampling is directed at specific respondents, perceived to be appropriate to the study: this process is known as 'theoretical sampling'. This is an *iterative* process, which describes the "weaving back and forth between data and theory" (Bryman 2001: 10). The details of the methodology used in this study are discussed at length in chapter 5.

2.2.2 Epistemological Perspectives

Epistemology can be described as the 'theory of knowledge', and relates to questions about the nature of concepts such as 'knowledge' and 'truth'. It is important for a researcher to make clear their epistemological position, as this reveals the form of the evidence that is to be regarded as 'acceptable knowledge' within the research. This should not be confused with issues of methodology and research design. Although one's epistemological position will directly influence these, it goes rather deeper than this and takes into account various philosophical considerations regarding the nature of 'truth' and 'knowledge'. As Mason puts it, "epistemology is, literally, [the] theory of knowledge, and should therefore concern the principles and rules by which [the researcher decides] whether and how social phenomena can be known, and how knowledge can be demonstrated" (1996: 13). The overall aim of social research should be to investigate the ontological issues suggested by the research questions (whether these concern social processes, cultural practices, discourses, meanings or whatever) from an epistemological position that is consistent with the nature of these questions, and capable of producing coherent and defensible explanations.

Von Wright (1983) suggests that the history of epistemological theory is dominated by two opposing traditions, namely 'postivism' and 'anti-positivism'. These positions, and their implications for this particular research, will be considered in turn.

Positivism

Augustus Comte first coined the phrase 'positive philosophy' in the 1830's. In the years that have passed since then, the history of what has come to be known as 'positivism' has been long and complex (Kolakowski 1993). Von Wright associates this methodological position with the 'Galilean tradition', a reference to the links between the "great awakening or revolution in the natural sciences during the late Renaissance and early Baroque era" (1983: 9) and the work of the early

'humanists' two or three hundred years later. Humanists, working in the fields of historiography, linguistics and social anthropology, successfully applied the methodological approaches of the natural scientists in their work. Positivism is an epistemological position that advocates the use of the methods of the natural sciences in the study of social phenomena. The 'rules' by which positivism works can be summarised as below:

- Only phenomena (and hence knowledge) confirmed by the senses can be taken as genuine knowledge (*phenomenalism)*
- Theory aims to generate hypotheses that can be tested, thus allowing explanations of laws to be assessed (*deductivism*)
- Knowledge comes through the collection of facts that provide the basis for laws (*inductivism*)
- Science (and research) must be conducted in a way which is value-free (*objectivity*)
- Scientific statements are the domain of the scientist. Normative statements, which cannot be confirmed or otherwise by the senses, are not.

(from Bryman 2001)

Durkheim, cited by May, summarised the relationship between positive philosophy and social research thus: "the social scientist must study social phenomena 'in the same state of mind as the physicist, chemist or physiologist when he probes into a still unexplored region of the scientific domain'" (1997: 14). Thus, in order to carry out social research to the satisfaction of positivists such as Durkheim, the 'rules' outlined above must be applied. Relating back to our previous discussion of deductivism and inductivism, it is important to point out that although the latter is usually perceived as being aligned with the naturalist paradigm, elements of inductivism are to be found in the positivistic tradition too. Yet, the importance of the deductivist approach in the natural sciences is heavily emphasised: "scientists try to express their theories in such a form that they can be tested i.e., refuted (or else corroborated) by such experience" (Popper 1972: 654).

Empiricism

The emphasis on attention to detail on the matter of data collection and the question of what constitutes reliable data found in the positivist approach is shared with that of the empiricists. Empiricism is a position that holds that 'facts' exist independently of how we interpret or collect them. In empiricist research, "the facts speak for themselves" (Blumer, 1969: 31). The relationship

between positivism and empiricism is close ("the former does rely on the methods of the latter" (May, 1997: 11)) but not absolute, as positivism is inherently theory-driven. That is, the aim is to test hypotheses through the careful collection and analysis of data. Empiricism, however, does not involve the testing or generation of theory – the 'facts' themselves say it all. In this case, the social researcher may be nothing more than a "technician" (ibid: 29), focused solely on the careful collection of data.

The two approaches outlined above fall into the broadly 'positivist' tradition, along with that of *realism* perhaps. In the context of this study, such approaches are of limited use. For example, the requirement that social 'science' be carried out in the same way as natural science is one which is difficult, and often inappropriate, to apply in practice. People do not act as molecules or atoms or plants do: they are able to think and react to their environment in ways that are meaningful, the results of the processes of cognition and reason. People are conscious – molecules, atoms and plants are not. Another rule of positivism is that of 'objectivity', which arises from the 'scientific' belief that research should (and can) be carried out in a way that is 'value-free'. Increasingly, researchers are questioning whether even 'real science' can be said to be value-free, not least the social sciences. Grumbine (1998), for example, discusses the scientific justifications put forward to defend what are essentially subjective beliefs about the value of certain forms of 'nature', in the ongoing debate concerning 'biodiversity protection' in American wilderness areas. Indeed, an entire academic field has emerged in recent years which focuses on 'the sociology of science' and aims to examine how supposedly objective, value-free science has in fact been influenced and shaped by the society in which is has been pursued. Thus, accusations of subjectivity mentioned previously turn out to be rather hollow. Humans are subjective creatures, even academics and researchers.

Having outlined briefly two of the representative epistemologies that fall into the 'positivist' tradition, we turn now to some of those that represent the 'anti-positivist' stance. Von Wright (1993) suggests that this stance emerged as a reaction against the positivist philosophy that had come to dominate the academic world during the nineteenth century. Many philosophers and academics at the time rejected certain central criteria of the positivist tradition, namely 'methodological monism', and the idea that the social sciences should rigorously adhere to the tenets of natural science. An important element of their attack was introduced by Droysen, in 1858, when for the first time he drew a sharp distinction between the ideas of *explanation* and *understanding*. In 'science' there is

no distinction and the terms are used synonymously. However, the anti-positivists perceived the latter to be distinguishable from the former by virtue of its "psychological twist" (Von Wright, 1983: 11), which placed an emphasis on the importance of 'empathy' in humanistic studies, described as the "re-creation in the mind of the scholar of the mental atmosphere, the thoughts and feelings and motivations, of the objects of... study" (ibid). This ties back to the previous discussion relating to the concepts of 'objectivity' and 'subjectivity' in research. Because the ultimate goal of the positivist is objective 'knowledge', subjective judgements are to be rejected because "the rule of phenomenalist, nominalist, conception of science... refuses to call value judgements and normative statements knowledge" (Kolakowski 1993: 6). Thus, *idealists* and *interpretivists* who reject the constraints of the positivist tradition are not seeking 'knowledge' as it is understood by positivism: they are seeking *understanding.* These ideas were developed by Dilthey (1833), who took Droysen's concept of *Verstehen* (1858) and developed it into a methodology known as *Geisteswissenschaften.* Although there is no good English translation of this concept, it has been described as a "moral science" (Von Wright 1993: 11) and has been seen as an attempt to emphasise the importance of 'empathic understanding' in the social sciences.

Interpretivism / Hermeneutics

The implications of the 'schism' described above have been far-reaching. In the context of this research, the work of the anti-positivists provides an epistemological perspective that is far more appropriate than that of the positivists. *Interpretivism* is a general term often used to describe the approach of the anti-positivists, though Von Wright (1993) suggests that *hermeneutics* is more appropriate. The approach of those seeking an understanding of human social behaviour finds expression in the work of Max Weber (1864-1920). Weber described sociology as "a science which attempts the interpretive understanding of social action in order to arrive at a causal explanation of its causes and effects" (1947: 88). Thus, although Weber refers to both explanation and understanding, the emphasis remains on the interpretive aspect of the process, rather than the objective collection of 'facts' in a value-free manner. The idea of *verstehen,* mentioned previously, has been described by Weber as 'interpretive understanding', a good description of what the interpretivist researcher aims to achieve in relation to the social world.

Phenomenalism

The further development of the ideas outlined above led to the emergence of *phenomenology* as a strongly anti-positivist epistemology. Alfred Schutz (1899-1959) developed the ideas of Droysen, Dilthey, Weber, and other anti-positivists and interpretivists such as Husserl. The following, widely-quoted passage, describes Schutz's position:

> "The world of nature as explored by the natural scientists does not 'mean' anything to molecules, atoms and electrons. But the observational field of the social scientist – social reality – has a specific meaning and relevance structure for the beings living, acting and thinking within it. By a series of common-sense constructs they have pre-selected and pre-interpreted this world, which they experience as the reality of their daily lives. It is these thought objects of theirs which determine their behaviour by motivating it. The thought objects constructed by the social scientist, in order to grasp this social reality, have to be founded upon the thought objects constructed by the common-sense thinking of [people], living their daily life within the social world."
>
> (Schutz 1972: 59)

In this passage, Schutz makes several statements that have a particular resonance in the context of this current study. Firstly, he rejects the application of natural science methods in exploring the social world by pointing out that the objects under examination are too different: people are conscious, living beings. He goes on to highlight the idea of 'social realities'. While positivists may talk about some 'objective reality' which exists 'out there', independent of man's subjective perceptions, phenomenology holds that people create or construct their own social realities: the existence (or otherwise) of any 'external reality' is thus irrelevant. Human behaviour, he contends, is shaped by the innumerable constructs through which people experience and understand their own social world. If we, as researchers, wish to understand what drives human behaviour, we must seek to understand the way in which people construct and react within their own social realities.

The above, necessarily brief, description of the hermeneutic-phenomenological approach to social research skates over many of the more controversial aspects of it. Qualitative researchers using phenomenological methods have in the past been accused of 'hopeless subjectivism'. In particular, the issues that arise concerning the practical application of phenomenological methods in field

research can appear to be highly problematic (Knafl 1994). However, as Caelli (2001) suggests, it may be that the problem lies with phenomenological researchers themselves rather than the methodology: carrying out humanistic research is difficult enough, she suggests, and the situation is made more difficult by researchers who fail to make their methods clear and user-friendly. Pratt traces the development of phenomenology from Husserl's claim that "modern science...had become highly abstract, divorced from the actual experience [of humans]...and in need of anchoring in experience" (2000: 53), through to current applications of phenomenology in environmental philosophy. Certainly, the ideas and concepts that Pratt details are highly complex, but he identifies several aspects of the approach that are appropriate in an environmental context, and that of this current study. The focus in phenomenology is on 'lived experiences', it aims to uncover 'essences' and it places the emphasis firmly on the subject, and their relationship with the world of objects that surrounds them. In relation to environmental values, phenomenology allows us to reject the notion that "value is a feature of objects or it is created by subjects" (ibid: 79). These two extremes, often unhelpful when one excludes the other, become merely ways in which humans interact with the world – no more and no less.

Post-modernism / Post-structuralism

Another epistemological perspective that is likely to have implications for this study is that of *post-modernism*. In fact, post-modernism is less an established epistemology and more of "an intellectual perspective, movement or 'mood' – a contemporary sensibility" (Punch 1998: 143). Although the terms 'post-modernism' and 'post-structuralism' are being used here in a specific context – that of social research – the effects of both have rippled out into many diverse fields. Sarup (1993) lists some of the many artists, dramatists, architects and designers, novelists, and philosophers who can be seen as representatives of a post-modern movement. In many ways, the concept of post-modernity is much broader than the other epistemological perspectives that are outlined here. The ideas it promotes can be seen to have spilled out into everyday life: we talk of 'consumer society', of 'post-industrial society', each of which are reflections of post-modernism. This very broadness makes the concept challenging to identify or define.

Modernity, the historical period against which the post-modern movement is seen as a reaction, was characterised by "an emphasis on progress, and a faith in rationality and science as the means of its realisation" (Sarup 1993: 143). In particular, modernity holds that there exists some

underlying and unifying objective truth and certainty. Thus, the purpose of social research within the framework of modernity must be to "develop reasoned, connected and generalised accounts of the social world, aiming for invariant and universal knowledge" (ibid: 145). Lyotard's highly influential *The Post-modern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*(1994) "was one of the first works to challenge the legitimating myths of the modern age...[which included] the progressive liberation of humanity through science... the idea that philosophy can restore unity to learning and develop universally valid knowledge for humanity" (Sarup 1993: 132). Essentially, "post-modernists distrust meta-narratives; there is a deep suspicion of... any form of universal philosophy" (ibid: 145).

Post-structuralism is similar in many ways to post-modernism; Baudrillard, Foucault, Derrida and Lyotard all display elements of both concepts in their work. Post-structuralism, however, has perhaps even more to offer in the context of this research. The aim of the post-structuralists is "to deconstruct the means by which we have so far understood the human [subject]" (Sarup 1993: 2). Thus, using post-structural theory, it is possible to take widely-recognised ideas, such as 'environmentalism' or 'rurality', and rather than taking them for granted as 'grand narratives', we can attempt to *deconstruct* these ideas to uncover what lies behind the words themselves. Specifically we can examine what they mean to those who use them in their daily lives. Halfacree (1995) makes a post-structuralist approach to uncover the meaning of 'rurality', as the condition is experienced by those people who live it in their daily lives. Benton (1995) provides an excellent deconstructionist critique of 'environmentalism' and specifically environmental merchandising, using the ideas of Baudrillard (1981, 1988), Barthes (1977) and Eco (1986), which will be discussed in greater detail in chapter 3.

The very diversity of the post-modern concept means that its influences are detectable in numerous spheres within this current study. However, we can briefly review some of the most important of these, and the reader is directed to the publications mentioned in this paragraph for further details. Lash & Urry's widely quoted publication *Economies of Space and Sign* (1994) provides an excellent introduction and guide to the relationship between social research and the economies of the post-industrial, post-modern society, following on from their equally informative *The End of Organised Capitalism* (1987). They observe the "emptying out [of] subjects, space-time, objects" (1994: 13) within the increasingly post-modern political economy as outlined by Giddens (1984, 1990), as things and people become increasingly abstracted and removed from concrete

space and time. The post-modern 'sign-value' of objects is identified as being even more abstract than 'exchange-value' or 'even 'use-value': the meaning of objects has "lost its concrete and particular foundation" (Lash & Urry 1994: 14). Thus, as objects in such economies are emptied of both *symbolic* and *material* content, "the aestheticisation of material objects can take place in either the production or in the circulation and consumption of such goods" (ibid: 15). Examples include the creation of the 'brand image by corporate marketers, and in the phenomenon of tourism, where the tourist consumes services and experiences by turning them into signs, through the semiotic process of transformation (Urry 1990). Thus, in the context of this research, we can examine both the production of certain 'products and services', as well as the commodification and consumption of specific signs and symbols.

In the context of social research, the ideas of post-modernism and post-structuralism are highly influential. In many ways they can be seen to 'free-up' the researcher from the constraints of positivistic science, since they reject utterly the idea that 'objective truth' exists 'out there', waiting passively to be 'known', 'understood' and 'explained'. Equally, the role of the researcher is 'decentred' in post-modernism; the emphasis on 'the expert', so totemic in the construction of positivistic science, is reduced. Finally, the post-structuralist framework provides a way to explore meaning and understanding without having to resort to dictionary definitions, which may mean nothing to the subjects of the research. We are not overly interested in testing any 'grand narratives': rather, the aim is to explore and understand the 'little stories' (Lyotard 1984) of our subjects.

2.2.3 Ontological Considerations

Having established the epistemological perspectives that underpin this research, it is also important to make clear the ontological position being adopted. Ontology is a difficult concept to define, but essentially it refers to 'the science of thought' or 'of being'. Adopting a certain ontological perspective means that one holds certain beliefs or understandings about 'the way things are'. Mason (1996: 11), recognising this difficulty in identifying one's ontological position, lists some of different perspectives adopted by previous researchers and philosophers, and suggests that the potential researcher strives to evaluate these in the light of their own research interests. Her list is extensive, though by no means exhaustive, but it does give the reader some comprehension of the range of possibilities encompassed by social research.

The ontological perspective that underpins the interpretivist approach adopted here can be broadly described as *constructionism*. This position holds that "social phenomena and their meanings are continually accomplished by social actors [and] implies that social phenomena and categories are not only produced through social interaction but that they are in a constant state of revision" (Bryman 2001: 18). Importantly, such a position is antithetical to the position of scientific objectivism discussed previously, because the constructionist does not take for granted the existence of some 'reality' that exists independently of social actors. Rather, both the social world and knowledge about the social world are seen as being *socially constructed*. Thus, all the categories and meanings which people use to help them make sense of their social world can be seen to be socially constructed: they are not given.

2.3 The Philosophical Toolkit Summarised

The epistemological and ontological perspectives being adopted in this current study can be summarised thus. The overall aim of the research, as outlined in chapter 1, is to explore a relatively under-researched area: social constructions of environmental quality and the relationship to rural enterprise. This represents a general area of research interest, and although the development of research questions can help to narrow down the field of study, it is likely that an *inductive* approach to the relationship between theory and practice will be adopted. The development of theories to explain human behaviour, rather than the testing of hypotheses is the aim. Furthermore, since the subjects of study are to be rural entrepreneurs, a positivist approach is highly unlikely to be appropriate. Rather, the epistemological approach needs to be sensitive to the intricate workings of human behaviour, allowing for the ability of our subjects to react to the social situations in which they find themselves. An *interpretivist* approach will allow us to investigate the subjective meanings of social action. Finally, since human perceptions of environmental value will form a major part of the investigation, a *hermeneutic-phenomenalist* approach will allow us to examine these values as they are experienced by the subjects themselves. That is, rather than accepting that environmental values are pre-constituted by some external, objective force, we can take the view that such values are inherently subjective and we seek instead to understand how they are constructed by people in their daily lives. Thus, the ontological position adopted in this study is one of *constructionism*, as described above.

The implications of stating the epistemological and ontological perspective to be adopted in this study are many. For example, certain methodological approaches sit more easily within the interpretivist, phenomenological tradition than others. Broadly speaking, qualitative techniques of data collection and analysis are better suited to such a perspective for several reasons. They emphasise the importance of an inductive approach to theory building through research and are amenable to the view of social reality, as it is understood in the constructionist tradition. The details of the methodology used will be outlined in more detail in chapter 5.

2.4 Guide to the Literature Review

Previously, the relationship between theory and practice in social research was briefly discussed. In particular, reference was made to a school of thought which holds that the literature pertaining to a particular area of research interest amounts to more than just a report of 'progress to date' in the subject area, and this is very much the case in this study. The literature relating to the general fields of environmental philosophy and rural enterprise are diverse and complex. As such, the literature must be examined within the particular context of this study. It has been pointed out above that a constructionist approach is to be taken. As such, the literature relating to perceptions of environmental quality and value, and the social behaviour of rural entrepreneurs can be used to help us develop a 'pre-understanding' of these social constructs. Indeed, it may be that the literature itself may be *part* of this overall social construct. Such an understanding is likely to be vitally important to the overall intellectual exercise. Thus, the purpose of the literature review is twofold. Firstly, the aim is to provide a general introduction and review of previous research, and an accurate account of current thought. Secondly, and perhaps more importantly, the literature review serves as the first stage in the research proper: it will allow us to explore and unpack social constructions of environmental value, rurality and entrepreneurship. Applying the research questions, which were outlined in the previous chapter, to the literature itself, can do this. Answers can be sought within the literature, which we hope will suggest ways to proceed in the research proper.

An obstacle encountered early in the process of reviewing the literature was the lack of material referring directly to environmental values *and* enterprise. A great deal of literature relates to each individual subject, and the many variations on the themes, but very little deals directly with the relationship between the two. As a result, the structure of the literature review is as follows.

Chapter 3 is a review of recent research and academic discussion of environmental values, ranging from philosophical debates concerning the relationship between man and nature, to an examination of certain widely recognised social constructions of environmental values: wilderness and countryside. The aim is to develop the research questions of "how do people value 'natural' environments?" and "do objective, scientific evaluations of environmental quality correlate with those of 'ordinary' people?". Chapter 4 comes at the subject from another angle, beginning with a review of various rural development issues, entrepreneurship research and the importance of small business in rural areas. In this respect, it represents a more traditional understanding of a literature review which serves the purpose of 'scene-setting'. However, Chapter 4 then goes on the examine ideas about 'environmental enterprise', particularly the idea that subjective sources of value can somehow be transformed into sellable commodities by the actions of entrepreneurial individuals. This draws on the ideas developed in Chapter 3, and ties them into ongoing attempts to understand the entrepreneurial process. The research question being explored in this section of the literature review is, "how do rural entrepreneurs make use of social constructions of environmental quality?". In effect, the various elements of the literature are drawn together to provide 'pre-understanding', which equips the researcher to tackle the field research in an informed manner in subsequent chapters.

CHAPTER 3

Social Constructions of High Quality 'Natural' Environments

"Of course, every tribal myth is true – for a given value of 'true'" Terry Pratchett, *Small Gods*.

3.1 Introduction

The literature review opens with a discussion of the definitions and meanings of some of the terms that are to be used most frequently in this study, such as 'environment', 'nature' and 'natural'. Barry (1999) points out that the meaning of 'environment' is often thought of as being synonymous with the 'natural world' and 'nature'. Popular programmes such as David Attenborough's "Life on Earth" broaden this understanding, to the point that everyone from academics to lay publics tend to use the words interchangeably (O'Brien and Cahn 1996). It is important that we spend some time considering the various meanings of these terms, both as they are continually debated within academic circles, and as they circulate among the wider public because, as Barry goes on to point out, "distinguishing between them is required in critically analysing the concept of environment within social theory" (1999: 16). Another aspect we must consider is that of 'value' and 'environmental value(s)' in particular, specifically how such values may affect the actions of people in their everyday lives. The issue of 'environmental quality' is discussed in some detail, from the perspectives of 'ordinary' people and, in contrast, those of environmental 'professionals'. In line with the post-structuralist perspective, 'meta-narratives' are to be challenged, or at the very least picked over in detail, and deconstructed in order to expose the roots of such concepts as 'environment' and 'nature'. The over-arching aim of this Chapter is to examine how, and in what way, people *value* and *evaluate* the quality of 'natural environments'. In order to do so competently we must delve into the literature related to this subject so as to move into the research proper with an informed and well-grounded understanding of the important issues and concepts.

3.2 Contested Terms; Environment, Nature and Natural

3.2.1 The 'environment' and 'The Environment'

The term 'environment' is used widely, and in many different contexts. The Oxford Concise Dictionary defines it thus:

> **Environment** 1. Physical surroundings and conditions esp. as affecting people's lives. 2. Conditions or circumstances of living. 3. The external conditions affecting growth of plants and animals.
>
> (Oxford Concise Dictionary)

It appears then that the 'environment' can be taken to mean "surroundings", or perhaps the "living context" in which an organism exists. Yet the boundaries of these surroundings are not rigidly defined, and while our dictionary definition gives us the bare bones of meaning for the term, there remains a great deal of 'fleshing out' to do if we are to understand the wider meanings of 'environment'.

Cooper, considering the emergence of a wealth of literature on the subject of "environmental ethics", spends some time discussing this very issue. He proposes that there are three ways in which the term 'environment' is commonly interpreted. Firstly, one can define the environment of an organism by simply drawing a geographical radius around it and saying that everything within this line is its 'environment', a definition that is broadly in line with the dictionary definition given above. Another, more subtle, interpretation is of the environment as "the French *milieu* or the Spanish *ambiente*" (1992: 168): "an environment is what a creature knows – and knows in a certain way" (ibid: 169). This is likened to a badger "knowing" about its sett in a way a zoologist cannot fully appreciate, however much time and effort he might expend in observation of the badger. In this sense a creature's environment can be defined, phenomenologically, as a 'network of meanings' or a 'field of significance'. In this way, an 'environment' is "an important part of what the creature or entity is...one cannot identify a creature without referring to its environment" (Barry 1999: 13). Heidegger (cited in Cooper 1992: 170) refers to a person's world in a similar way, as a "referential totality". In this sense, 'environment' is a *relational* concept: it is given meaning by what it relates to, whether this is a badger within its sett, or any other object. It is this relational sense that allows people to talk of 'the built environment' or 'the learning environment', neither of which reflect the

synonymous understanding of 'environment' referring to 'nonhuman nature'. Cooper (1992) suggests that this latter meaning of 'environment', as a relational concept, is particularly useful in the context of social theory. Indeed, for the purposes of this study, which adopts a phenomenological approach to investigating perceptions of the quality of the 'environment', it provides an appropriate starting point.

The third meaning identified by Cooper, which has been promulgated by many recent public discussion of environmentalism, defines 'environment' as "The Environment" and he emphasises the importance of capitalising the noun. Rather than focussing on the surroundings or *milieu* in which an organism lives, and the relational nature of the 'environment' that results, this other interpretation is falls in line with the concept of a 'Global Environment', 'the Biosphere'; the world as "just one big Environment" (ibid:167). Cooper feels that such a definition is too "distended" in that it encompasses incompatible "tensions, hollowness and vagueness" (ibid: 172). Rolston, on the other hand, posits a rather more favourable view of the 'Environment', suggesting that while the '*milieus*' may well exist in a relational sense because we all have our own 'environments', that collectively they comprise "*the* environment, in which all these horizons [personal environments] are sustained" (1997: 44). Furthermore, he argues, "Environment is *the* ground of my being, and we can remove the 'my' because 'the' environment is the common ground of all being" (ibid.). For Rolston, 'The Environment' exists as a "webwork" (ibid.) of personal 'environments'.

The rise of the 'environmental movement' has had a huge influence on public knowledge about and concern for the environment, as documented by Nicholson (1989) and Pepper (1984, 1996). Cooper (1992) suggests that many influential academics, primarily environmental scientists, have contributed to the current dominance of 'The Environment' ideology. Barry (1999) provides support for this idea. He suggests that while academics have argued over meanings for 'environment' for many years, only recently, with the recognition of the so-called 'environmental crisis', have more concrete issues such as global warming and climate change, deforestation, desertification, pollution and biodiversity loss come to the forefront of public and academic debate and concern. Many authors have written gloomy accounts of the Earth's suffering as a result of man's uncontrolled and unsustainable appetite for development at any cost: Goudie (1981); Meyer (1996); Turner, et. al. (1990), and the findings of academics and conservation organisations are regularly reproduced in the popular media. As a result, it may be that in the public mind, the

meaning of 'environment' has become less associated with local "*milieus*" and much more strongly associated with 'Environmental Problems' on a global scale – part of 'The (global) Environment' (Barry 1999). Brookes (1976) suggests that as 'environmental issues' became more prominent in the media during the 1960's and 70's, individual issues such as transport problems, pollution and unsightly development came to be seen as part of a wider problem – that of 'The Environment'. Motorway building and nuclear power stations, species extinction and habitat loss, pollution of water and air and many other issues have come to be collectively perceived as constituting an 'environmental crisis' Porrit (1984). Dalton (1994) points out that this was a radical change in terms of the issues with which 'environmental groups' concerned themselves. Previously, (in the UK at least) the emphasis had been on nature conservation and heritage protection, dominated by groups such as the National Trust and the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds. In the late 1960's – for a variety of reasons (see Grove-White 1991) – the 'environmental groups' that were emerging had a profoundly different outlook. As Nas puts it (cited in Jordan & Maloney) "they changed their orientation from conservation to a critique of prevailing methods of production and patterns of consumption" (1997: 46). This reflected a wider cultural change in society, driven by the growing belief that quality of life could not simply be provided or measured by rapid economic growth alone (Pepper 1994, 1996; Grove-White 1991). It may be that groups like the World Wildlife Fund for Nature, Greenpeace and Friends of the Earth have popularised this interpretation of the 'environment' as 'The Environment' and disseminated it to a much wider audience well outside the bounds of academia. The manifestos of such groups certainly reflect a bias towards conceiving of the world as 'The Environment' and refer often to the 'Global Environmental Crisis' (see World Wildlife Fund for Nature UK (1999), Greenpeace (1999), Friends of the Earth (1999)).

Thus we have established so far that there are several understandings of the meaning of 'environment'. Barry highlights another aspect of this discussion that may have consequences for any study, such as this, which aims to develop social theory in the context of environmental values, and that is what he calls the "fact / value distinction" (1999: 12). Contested words like 'environment' are not simply used in the descriptive, or factual, sense. They are also used to "express, justify or establish particular values or judgements, courses of action and reaction, policy prescriptions and ways of thinking" (ibid): they are frequently referred to when making a whole range of normative judgements, and are used to justify one's own position on an issue. Although 'the environment'

may exist as an objective reality – something concrete and physical – the subjective meanings and understandings of the term that are used in daily discourse are perhaps of more importance.

3.2.2 Man and the Environment: within or without?

One of the fundamental questions relating to our understanding of 'environment' lies at the heart of ongoing philosophical debate concerning the relationship between human society and the 'environment'. This debate revolves around whether or not man is part of 'the Environment', and the various – and opposing – philosophical positions that emerge as a result. As Cooper notes, authors increasingly write of man as being part of the 'The Environment', and he points out the way in which many authors "oscillate between the rhetorics of 'otherness' and 'oneness'". (1992: 178). Note that Cooper uses the capitalised form to refer to the 'distended Environment'. He exposes the underlying illogicality of authors who, on the one hand, appeal to some quasi-mystical 'harmony of nature' of which man is part, while, on the other, they rail against the apparently dire consequences of man's activities within 'The Environment' – pollution, despoliation and eventual catastrophe. As we shall see, this debate is long-standing and there are many interesting and challenging arguments for each side. So where does man stand in relation to the 'environment'? Is he in, or out?

At one extreme lies the school of thought that holds that man and environment are fundamentally separate from each other. Thus the 'natural environment' comes complete with a full complement of physical entities, species and processes that have nothing to do with human society; they exist independently of each other (Barry 1999). Pratt *et. al.* (2000) recount the evolution of the philosophy of "objective nature", beginning with Descartes' separation of the human mind and the 'external world', through to the current concern that objectifying nature as something separate from human society leads humans to damage it because they feel no fundamental connection with something so 'alien'. McNaghten & Urry outline this doctrine of 'environmental realism' as follows: "the environment is essentially a 'real entity' which, in and of itself is substantially separate from social practices and human experience" (1998: 1).

The opposing doctrine of 'environmental idealism' holds that "The way to analyse nature and the environment is through identifying, critiquing and realising various 'values' which underpin or relate to the character, sense and quality of nature. Such values held by people about nature and the

environment are ... underlying, stable and consistent" (ibid). Some writers, particularly those of the 'deep ecology' and 'deep green' school of thought, hold a more extreme philosophical position and contend, "the human being is to be seen as *a part of*, and not *apart from*, the wider whole that is nature at large" (Pratt *et.al.* 2000: 35). As Devall & Sessions have it, "Ecological consciousness and deep ecology are in sharp contrast with the dominant worldview of technocratic-industrial societies which regards humans as isolated and fundamentally separate from the rest of nature, as superior to, and in charge of, the rest of creation" (1985: 15).

Although these opposing doctrines may seem far removed from the reality of environmental management and conflict in the 'real world' they do in fact lie at the heart of many conflicts. Callicott and Nelson's book *The Great New Wilderness Debate* (1998) includes writings by many of the foremost environmental philosophers and activists, as well as ecologists, conservation biologists, environmental historians and sociologists concerned with the politics and practice of wilderness conservation. Although the essays and articles focus strongly on the 'wilderness idea', which will be discussed further, they demonstrate that the opposing positions of academics and activists on these issues frequently arises from their essentially different beliefs concerning the nature / culture dualism, outlined above. Some examples of current thinking will serve to demonstrate these conflicts of opinion. Holmes Rolston III, environmental philosopher, states quite unequivocally that "...there are critical differences between wild nature and human culture. Humans now superimpose cultures on the wild nature out of which they once emerged" (1991: 371). Similarly, Dave Foreman, former EarthFirst! member and active wilderness campaigner, writes that "civilisation ... has caused a Nature / human dualism" (1998: 404). Although Foreman draws the line at claiming a fundamental philosophical separation between man and nature, preferring to lay blame for the current 'crisis' at the doors of "civilisation' – modern medicine, agribusiness and industrial science" (ibid). This is a good example of the illogicality to which Cooper referred previously. As an active environmentalist (founder of Earthfirst!) and promoter of direct action to 'Save the Environment', it appears that Foreman perceives the environment as 'The Environment (in Crisis)'. On the one hand he claims that man and nature are one, sharing the views of his deep ecology colleagues, yet on the other hand he claims that man's activities are threatening the viability of the self-same 'Environment'. His goal is to return man to 'Nature', through the removal of technologies which have allowed us to "temporarily divorce ourselves from Nature" (ibid).

Callicott himself has a different perspective, closer to that of 'environmental idealism'. He states that "man is a part of nature. We are only a species among species..." (1991: 239). Thus, while man's actions may *alter* the biosphere, such actions are not necessarily damaging to it – they may even, on occasion, prove to be beneficial. Callicott and Nelson's publication (1998) provide a highly informative and enjoyable 'sparring match' between the occasionally extreme, but very persuasive, proponents of the opposing positions.

There is a serious side to this debate, however arcane it might seem to those more concerned with action than apparently endless philosophising. A good understanding of the underlying philosophical debate is necessary, as it will provide depth and guidance for the research proper. Historically, the relationship between man and his environment relates to some of the most fundamental philosophical problems that have sparked debate and discussion since ancient times (see Pratt *et.al* 2000 , McNaghten and Urry 1998, Chappell 1997, and various articles collected in Callicott and Nelson 1998). As Chappell points out there is often a perceived gap between "the urgent and immediate imperatives of practice and the rather differently demanding imperatives of theory – the tension... between bottom-up and top-down" (1997: 15). Hence, he hopes that the development of a "consistent and cogent system of thought" (ibid) through the efforts of environmental philosophers and other thinkers, could lead to the resolution of conflicts over policy issues relating to the whole sphere of environmental management, ethics and other issues.

At the end of the day, we may well have to accept that 'environment' is an "essentially contested" term, and that we can find no "universally agreed and singular meaning or definition" (Barry 1999: 12). Yet this brief examination of some of the various meanings for 'environment', ('environment as *milieu* or network of meaning' and 'Environment as Crisis), has allowed us to examine some of the cultural and social meanings behind the widely used term. It is clear that such contested terms require examination. Cooper's explanation of 'environment' as a relational concept, and as a 'network of meanings' draws attention to the variety of 'environments' that exist, such as environment as 'wilderness', environment as 'tradition' and environment as 'countryside / rurality'. Some of these will be examined in detail as they are closely related to perceptions of 'nature' and 'natural', contested terms that are discussed in following sections.

3.2.3 Defining Nature and 'Natural' Environments

How can we define 'nature'? What is it, and what is meant by 'natural'? Williams suggests that 'nature' is "perhaps the most complex word in the language" (1988: 221) – a daunting challenge, then, to unravel its meanings. Barry (1999) suggests that the terms 'environment' and 'nature' are used almost synonymously in referring to the 'nonhuman world' – as the 'natural world' or the 'natural environment'. Indeed, it is probably impossible to separate the two.

As before, dictionary definitions can provide a useful starting point in our discussion of meaning and understanding.

Nature

1. innate or essential qualities or characteristics
2. (often Nature) a) the physical power causing all the phenomena of the material world b) these phenomena, including plants, animals, landscape etc.
3. a specified element of human character
4. a) an uncultivated or wild area, condition, community b) the countryside, especially when picturesque

From the Oxford English Dictionary (1991)

Nature:

Natural World: *Natural world, natural history, scenery, environment, life*
Character: *Character, personality, disposition, make-up, temperament, spirit*
Kind: *Kind, sort, type, description, characteristics, character, features, quality*

(From a computer thesaurus)

Thus, there appear to be two basic understandings of the term 'nature'. Firstly, 'nature' refers to the 'nonhuman world', perhaps in much the same way as 'environment' does, and this may be the reason for their synonymous use in many instances. Nature, and its apparent equivalent in this context, 'the natural environment', are seen to be quite separate from human society and culture. Broadly, it refers to what is 'out there', away from man and the evidence of his culture, thus the reference to 'the countryside' and to 'uncultivated' or 'wild areas' in the above definitions. In many ways, the deconstruction of 'environment' applies to that of 'nature' in this sense: many of the same ideas underpin its meaning. Barry (1999) does caution, however, that the two are not identical, suggesting that 'the environment' is something much wider than 'nature' can be.

There is a second, and important, sense in which the words 'nature' and 'natural' are used. The words 'natural', and its opposite, 'artificial' or 'unnatural', are frequently used – almost unconsciously – in making and justifying evaluative judgements on everything from wildlife

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The range of these constructions is considerable, yet the authors can find examples to express each, and in line with post-modernist thinking, each can be shown to be as valid (or as illusory) as any other. Obviously, to attempt to deconstruct each and every possible socially constructed understanding of 'the environment' as being representative of a particular idea is an impossible task in a study of this size. Barry (1999) suggests an alternative. In his book *Environment and Social* Theory he identifies two particularly powerful constructs, and attempts to deconstruct these, in order to expose the hidden and often taken-for-granted assumptions that underpin these particular examples. Rennie-Short (1991) too identifies and examines the same constructs. These are 'Environment as Wilderness' and 'Environment as Countryside'. These constructions of 'environment' have attracted much academic attention, and they are particularly widespread, powerful and highly relevant within the context of this study. 'Environment as Wilderness' for example, makes a stimulating deconstructionist study because, for many people, 'wilderness' represents the ultimate 'high quality' environment. The connotations of the word, and the symbolism tied up in the concept are enough to drive what is now a global movement campaigning for the preservation of 'wild areas'. Thus, an understanding of the perceptions and values which underlie the 'Wilderness Ideal' may help us to identify why people attach such importance to certain elements or features of 'high quality' environments. In short, if we can identify what makes wilderness 'special' we can perhaps explore these ideas in the context of other, less totemic, forms of environment. The second construction to be examined, 'Environment as Countryside', is equally powerful, and perhaps even more widespread in its influence, at least in the UK. The idea of 'Rurality', what it means and what we think it *should* mean directly influences the values and actions of many people. The importance of the 'Environment as Countryside' construct to this study is two-fold. Firstly, as is discussed below, rural areas are frequently characterised as 'natural', and one of the aims of this review is to unpick the meanings of this description as applied to rural environments. Secondly, the subjects of the study have been specifically identified as 'rural entrepreneurs'. We are interested in exploring a social phenomenon that takes place in rural areas. Thus, we need to understand why people *value* rural areas, in the context of environmental values. Thus, a thorough deconstruction of the 'Environment as Wilderness' and 'Environment as Countryside' will equip us with an understanding of the powerful symbols, images and beliefs tied up in each construct, and allow us to develop some theories as to the importance of each in the context of rural enterprise.

3.3.1 Environment and Nature as Wilderness

'Wilderness Areas' have been targeted throughout the world by environmentalists for both preservation and conservation, leading to some of the most bitter and protracted 'environment versus development' conflicts. In this review it will be argued that wilderness areas have come to represent idealised 'natural environments', both in North America, where the idea was originally conceived, and – increasingly – on a global scale. Cronon points out that "although wilderness may today seem to be just one environmental concern among many, in fact it serves as the foundation for a long list of other such concerns that on their face seem quite remote from it. That is why its influence is so pervasive" (1995: 475). In examining the origins and development of the 'wilderness concept', and by looking at the scientific and social perspectives of wilderness values (and evaluation), we can develop useful insights into how wider environmental quality may be perceived.

As with 'sustainable development' and 'biodiversity', a universally accepted definition of 'wilderness' is difficult to come by. Roderick Nash, the American wilderness historian, points out that although the word is officially a noun, it acts like an adjective, and he points out that the term is "so heavily weighed with meaning of a personal, symbolic and changing kind that it is difficult to define" (1982: 1). Dictionary definitions usually refer to 'wild', 'uncultivated' and otherwise undeveloped land. The US Government in the 1964 Wilderness Act defines wilderness thus: "in contrast with those areas where man and his own works dominate the landscape, [wilderness is] an area where the earth and its community of life are untrammelled by man, where man himself is the visitor who does not remain". Alternatively, the editor of the journal *Environmental Conservation* suggested that the term "might be best left undefined", given that the somewhat "nebulous concept [is] in some respects a figure of the imagination that differs considerably in different people's minds, and can moreover vary according to their mental moods and physical fitness" (Anonymous 1983: 281).

Origins of the Wilderness Concept

In the 19th century the first immigrants from Europe arrived on the eastern shores of America, the 'New World'. As Callicot recounts, they were driven by both a practical need and a moral conviction to subdue the land they found, to "convert its howling forests to bountiful farms" (1992: 299). It was not until the closing of the 19th century, and the end of the frontier-age, that new ways of thinking about the environment, and the natural resources contained within it, began to emerge.

Callicott (1991, 1992) identifies this as the emergence of a 'Romantic-Transcendental Ethic', which and suggests that this change came to inform and strongly underpin the emergence of the modern-day wilderness and environmental movements in the United States.

John Muir, a man who has come to be known as the 'Grandfather of Conservation' was one of the first advocates of the wilderness areas of Northern America (Fox 1982). Through Muir's eyes, pristine 'nature' was to be viewed as a temple of God, and its 'perfection' was sullied when put to economic uses. He believed that using the ancient forests or high meadows of North America as sources of timber and grazing land was somehow morally inferior to visiting these places for the purposes of "religious transcendence, aesthetic contemplation, sublime exhilaration and healing rest and relaxation" (Callicot 1992: 300). Callicott places Muir's writings, and his beliefs, firmly in the context of the aforementioned "Romantic–Transcendental Preservation Ethic" (ibid: 299). Donald Worster, environmental historian, notes "there was a harshly negative side to Muir's vision, a disgust for human pretension and pride that ran very close to misanthropy. Lord man ... was an ugly blot on the face of the Earth... [and] that there is a perfect goodness and beauty to be found in the natural world" (1988: 268). So it can be suggested that Muir's appreciation for wilderness areas was informed by a somewhat misanthropic ethic, which was as much 'anti-human' as it was 'pro-nature'. This ethic can be seen to have been lived on in the beliefs of many contemporary environmental conservationists and scientists; see Foreman (1987, 1998), Rolston (1991), Hardin (1969), Janzen (1986), all of whom – to varying degrees – characterise man as the 'despoiler' of 'Nature' pristine.

Rennie-Short (1991) identifies an important influence in the development of the Wilderness Ethic as that of a two groups of American writers and artists: the Transcendentalists and the Frontier Writers. The group known as the Transcendentalists, including Ralph W Emerson, Henry Thoreau, and Muir himself, were all prolific writers. Many of their essays were based on their own experiences and perceptions of 'natural' nature and wilderness areas. Although these essays are not necessarily fictional, they are descriptive, emotional and highly subjective accounts of the authors' personal philosophies regarding wilderness and nature, and they invested a quasi-religious, spiritual quality in the landscapes of North America. Examples include Muir's *My First Summer in the Sierra,* Thoureau's *Walden* and Emerson's *Nature*. These semi-autobiographical accounts have proved to be highly influential texts, read and quoted widely today by the

preservationist and conservation movement. Hunter (1995) highlights the close link between their beliefs, characterised by Thoreau's expressed belief that, "In Wildness is the preservation of the World" and the wholly fictional writings of Frontier authors such as James Fenimore Cooper. Many of Fenimore Cooper's novels (including *The Last of the Mohicans*) were set in the forests and mountains of North America, the same landscapes that inspired Emerson, Thoreau and Muir. Cooper may not have argued directly for preservation of the wilderness areas in which his novels were set, but he (and other American authors like him) provided inspiration for the emerging preservationist movement. Cooper presented to his many readers an image of the American wilderness as a place of sublime natural beauty, where man could discover his personal moral worth. The collective works of the Transcendentalists and the Frontier writers led to a change in attitude that was at the time regarded as novel, yet eventually was to lead to the passing of the Wilderness Act of 1964, a gradual, but ultimately massive reversal of American wilderness values. Rather than shunning the 'wild land' as a dangerous, devilish place, Americans were taught to value wilderness areas for the scenic grandeur of the landscape, and for the characteristics that it came to represent:, namely redemption, goodness, strength, nobility and God's Own Country.

Another major cultural influence on the development of the 'Wilderness Ideal' noted by many authors is that of the Romantic Movement in the UK and Europe. Anderson (1995) states that, "nature in this [Romantic] conception is profoundly anti-industrial". This 'anti-industrialism' was also expressed as 'anti-urbanism' and even 'anti-civilisation' (Nash 1982). Talbot suggests these changes led to a re-ordering of space as the bourgeoisie, represented in the United Kingdom by the Romantics, and in the US by the American Transcendentalists, attempted to resist the "sphere of consumption" (ibid). This reaction of the bourgeoisie against the huge physical, social and structural changes brought about by the Industrial Revolution "took on a concrete physical form in terms of the production of natural space - parks, nature reserves, rural estates and so on." (ibid).

As Hunter states, "At the heart of romanticism... was a re-evaluation of humanity's relationship with nature, especially wild nature". He likens this change in the common perception of wilderness as "without hyperbole, divinisation" (1995: 75). Certainly, the writings of Byron, Shelley, Wordsworth and their Transcendentalist counterparts such as Thoureau and Emerson, indulged heavily in the "romantic mystification" (Harvey 1995, cited in Talbot 1998: 327) and the subsequent 'subliminisation' of such landscapes. Cronon suggests, like Hunter, that wilderness has "become

loaded with some of the deepest core values of the culture that created and idealised it; it [has] become sacred" (1995: 477). The writings of the American Transcendentalists "transmuted [landscapes] into icon[s] of the sublime, a symbol of God's presence on earth" (ibid), thus ensuring their being valued above all other, mundane or despoiled places.

Wilderness Controversy: No place for the people?

Callicott and Nelson's *Great New Wilderness Debate*(1998) brings together a series of fascinating papers and other articles which demonstrate the philosophical, theoretical and political conflicts that lie at the heart of the wilderness debate, many of which were first raised in Roderick Nash's seminal work *Wilderness and the American Mind* (1982). Many of the issues discussed in Callicott and Nelson's book, unfortunately, lie out with the scope of this review. For example, charges of 'eco-imperialism' have been made against Western environmentalists, who seek to take the vision of the Western (or North American) wilderness preservation movement and implement it unthinkingly in Third World countries such as India, resulting in the alienation and removal of local people to form nature reserves (Guha 1998). Furthermore, the impact and status of native or indigenous peoples living in so-called 'wilderness' areas is endlessly debated, both in historical terms and the present day context. For example, Denevan, claims that "the [Native American] Indian impact was neither benign nor localised and ephemeral, nor were resources always used in a sound ecological way" (1992: 369). Foreman is unable to counter this claim with scientific or anthropological evidence – though he assuredly wishes he could ("Wilderness needs a few good anthropologists!" (1998: 403)), and the debate concerning the impact of human presence on 'wilderness areas' rumbles on. This debate is linked to the 'myth of the Noble Savage', discussed by Hunter (1995) as applying equally to the North American Indian and the Highlander in Scotland. During a walking trip to Yosemite, John Muir (cited in Hunter 1995: 109) was dismayed to encounter "a lot of queer, hairy muffled creatures coming shuffling, shambling, wallowing towards me as if they had no bones in their bodies". These 'creatures' were of course the native dwellers of the region. Indigenous peoples, in the Romantic conception of the wilderness were allowed to exist only as 'Noble Savages', or not at all (see Foreman (1998), arguing for the existence of 'true wilderness areas'). The Scottish Highlander had the refuge of kailyardism, which allowed him the dubious privilege of existing as a comic figure in his own lands, whereas the Native American has been recently reinstated as the "Ecological Hero" (Rennie-Short 1991: 102). Cronon notes that in America, several tribes of native Indians were excluded from their territorial lands so that "tourists

could safely enjoy the illusion that they were seeing their nation in its pristine, original state, in the new morning of God's creation" (1995: 482). He also points out that this removal of indigenous peoples to create "an 'uninhabited wilderness'... reminds us just how invented, just how constructed, the American wilderness really is... *there is nothing natural about the concept of wilderness*" (ibid: 73), emphasis added). This is a pertinent (though strongly disputed) observation, and one that has direct consequences for this study.

The Wilderness Myth; Social Constructions of Nature and 'Apparent Naturalness'

Rojek is even more direct in his deconstruction of the wilderness 'myth', and what he says applies not only to the American situation, but also to how 'wilderness' and 'nature' are understood throughout the Western world:

> "Far from offering us experience of pre-social nature ... the [wilderness] parks are, in fact social constructs, man-made-environments in which Nature is required to conform to certain social ideals... it must radiate cleanliness, vastness, emptiness, silence and peace. In other words it must be the exact opposite of the metropolis. The parks are stage representations of nature."
>
> (1993: 198)

Rennie-Short has no hesitation in describing 'wilderness' as a 'myth'. He points out that the 'mythic qualities' of landscapes such as 'wilderness' (or 'countryside' or 'city') "are of fundamental importance in how all societies 'see' their physical environments" (1991: 1). He goes on to comprehensively review the development of the 'wilderness myth' through the production of various signs and symbols by a range of 'environmental' authors and artists, many of who have been mentioned previously in this review. The influence of language and image in creating 'myths' cannot be underestimated. It is pertinent to note that much of the literature that was responsible for popularising the 'wilderness ethic' was fictional or semi-fictional – they were works that dealt in potent signs and literary symbolism rather than scientific 'facts'. Today, the works of contemporary environmental writers and artists continues to influence our relationship with nature. Slovic, referring to an essay on the consequences of the *Exxon Valdez* oil spill, highlights the "power of literary representations of nature in guiding public attitudes and opinions ... images are more impressive than statistics – they have an immediate emotional impact on an audience and they

stick in reader's minds" (1999: 29). The *Exxon Valdez* oil spill was one that received a very high level of media coverage, and reports in the *Anchorage Times* include pictures of dying, oil-covered wild otters, and highly expressive accounts how the spill affected both local wildlife and local communities. The words 'pristine wilderness' are used frequently to describe the region of the spill, Prince William Sound in Alaska. It is likely that this style of reporting was a factor in the unprecedented level of fine that the company was obliged to pay – the largest monetary fine ever given for an environmental 'crime' of this nature.

A more local and quite different example demonstrates the potency, and the power, of such symbolic language. The Scottish Tourist Board currently promotes the Highlands and Islands region of Scotland as "the last wilderness in Europe" (Scottish Tourist Board, 1998: 36). This marketing device directly invokes the power of the wilderness concept. In using it, the Tourist Board is setting up an extremely powerful, and highly contentious, image of the Highlands and Islands. It means that when people visit the region, drawn by such advertising, they will expect to feel they are indeed visiting a 'wilderness' – with all the recognisable social, cultural and physical signs and symbols that this implies. Indeed, the opportunity to 'experience wilderness' may well be the sole reason for their visit. As an anecdote to demonstrate this point, a colleague who works in a field studies centre in Beauly, Invernesshire, recently accompanied a group of European visitors on a field trip. They dutifully nodded their appreciation of the rolling farmland and attractive woodlands in the area. However, when the group finally arrived in upper Glen Strathfarrar, surrounded by bleak, wind-blasted mountains, and a desolate upland loch (a classic example of Fraser Darling's (1947) 'wet desert'), their immediate reaction was 'This is what Scotland is meant to be like! Now I feel I'm in Scotland!" The Brigadoon paradox (Gold & Gold 1995) seems to live on –a place's image is so strongly fixed in the visitor's mind, that the reality is hidden by the perception. While the broad-leaved forests and snow-capped mountains of New England, or the pine-covered shores of an Alaskan sound may seem very distant from the bleak uplands of Rannoch Moor, the distance in people's minds – and in their perceptions of what constitutes a 'Wilderness Experience' – is perhaps not so great.

3.3.2 Environment and Nature as Countryside

When considering 'environment as countryside' we are concerned with ideas about 'the rural' and 'rurality'. We are primarily interested in how people think about the terms 'environment', and

'nature' in relation to the rural environment. It is where we (in the UK at least) produce some of our food, and where we go in ever-increasing numbers to spend our leisure time. People make use of the countryside in innumerable ways including the following:

- A place to live and work
- A place to take part in recreation
- A 'natural' or 'traditional' place
- A 'good' place to bring up children
- A place to escape the 'rat race'
- A place to view pleasing landscapes

(from McNaughten & Urry 1998)

The number of different disciplines which are involved, to varying degrees, in what might be known as 'countryside' or 'rural' research issues is immense. It is simply not possible to do justice, in a review of this length, to the wealth of literature relating to these diverse fields of research. To make sense of the perceptions and values which inform the various 'uses' of the countryside is an equally challenging prospect. In discussing the subject we will touch on the fields of rural sociology, rural development, conservation and ecological studies, land use management and conflicts, land ownership, rural economics, migration studies and many others. To leave any of these out would be to neglect some facet of the 'rural' studies field – yet to review each comprehensively is beyond the scope of this study.

Perhaps we can begin – as we have done in previous sections – with a look at how rurality or 'the rural' can be defined. Almost immediately we are in trouble; as noted above rural areas serve many purposes and as a result hold many different meanings for different individuals. The sheer volume of literature that is devoted to attempts to identify an acceptable definition for rurality is testament to this. As Robinson (1994) notes, many definitions have been developed, but they fail generally to encompass the wide variety of needs of those who use such definitions. In other words, while one definition might suit – say – a rural sociologist, it will not suffice for an agricultural planner – yet both may be operating within the same 'rural space'. One effect of this, as noted by many authors, is that "people make statements about 'rural this' and 'rural that' which are often based on several different definitions of 'rural' simultaneously" (Select Committee on the European Communities 1990: 3). So it is important to consider which definitions and assumptions are influencing one's own research. Cloke offers three "forbidding factors" which mitigate against the successful defining of 'rurality'. First, "rural definition depends on the functions designated to the countryside by those creating the definition. Second, rural areas are undergoing considerable temporal change due to social, economic and technological developments [so] definition itself must therefore be dynamic in

order to cope with these changes... Finally, rurality is subject to intra-national, international and cross-cultural variation [and] has to take account of spatial and cultural differentiation at every scale" (1985: 5).

Rural studies have taken several different directions since their beginning, perhaps as a result of different definitions of 'rurality' gaining favour within the academic community at different times. Cloke (1985) goes on to review some of the various approaches, as do Robinson (1994), Hoggart (1990) and Halfacree (1993).

Social Constructions of the Countryside

Each of the approaches mentioned above attempt to define, in an objective way, 'the rural', or to somehow ascertain 'degrees of rurality'. In recent years, in tandem with the 'humanist' turn in the social sciences (Giddens 1984) some researchers have attempted to take rural studies in a somewhat different direction. Keith Hoggart's influential article *Let's do away with Rural* argues that "differences across rural areas have been recognised, but they have been inadequately theorised and similarities in causal processes across the rural-urban divide have received far too little attention". He believes that as a result "the undifferentiated use of 'rural' in a research context is detrimental to the advancement of social theory" (1990:1). Following Hoggart, Halfacree (1993) and Shucksmith (1994) discuss this *social constructionist* approach to identifying 'the rural'. Their aim, in part, is to take account of the multi-functionality of rural areas. Fundamentally, the grounds on which 'the rural' is conceptualised shifts from the 'knowledge' of 'experts' to the 'understandings' of 'ordinary people'. Social representation theory rejects the idea that daily behaviour is premised on a 'scientific' approach. Instead, it "argues that renewed importance needs to be attached to the paramount realities of everyday life" (Halfacree 1993: 29). Thus, essentially, rurality becomes what we (or our subjects) *believe* it to be. Studying "lay discourses" opens up new ways of defining, and understanding rurality through those people who experience it daily. In a second paper on the subject, Halfacree attempts to put these ideas into practice, using qualitative research methods to "build up a definition of the rural from individual respondents, instead of attempting to fit empirical material to our pre-suppositions of what rural is" (1995: 4).

One finding of Halfacree's research confirms that the idea of the 'Rural Idyll' is alive and well among people living in rural England. The idea of the countryside as an 'idyll' is by no means a

novel concept, as Howard Newby points out in his book *Green and Pleasant Land? Social change in rural England* (1979). The 'rural as idyll' perception has been expressed through a literary and cultural tradition that has persisted in Western Europe for many hundreds of years. There are innumerable strands contributing to the overall concept of the 'rural idyll'. The Romantics – poets, writers and artists – contributed to the popularisation of this understanding of the rural areas. In the same way as James Fenimore Cooper's adventure stories promoted the American 'wilderness ethic' (Rennie-Short 1991) the writings of Shelly and Byron, and the paintings of Constable were frequently "taken as literal descriptions of rural life by the ever-increasing urban majority" (Newby 1979: 15).

It is interesting that Newby highlights the 'urban majority' in the above statement. Indeed, one of the main contentions of his book is that although rural dwellers may live in the countryside, it is the urban dweller that tends to believe most strongly in the existence of the 'rural idyll'. This is significant as this conception of rurality is characterised by a strongly anti-industrial and anti-urban ethic. As Lowe & Flynn (1989: 225) put it, "since the late 18th century industrialisation has provoked popular nostalgic reaction for the disappearing pre-industrial world". Barry suggests that this "nostalgic reaction" may take the form of a "sense of loss of being within the 'natural order' ... living in an urban environment distances people from [the] reality ... of the natural world" (1999: 97). This is encapsulated in the dominant meanings attached to the 'countryside' that exists in direct contrast with the 'town'. The two are expected to fulfil very different functions – essentially "...the countryside is seen as the last remnant of a golden age...the countryside has become the refuge from modernity" (Rennie-Short 1991: 34). The Romantics used the countryside as a symbol through which to express the ideals and values they, themselves, held. In many ways, the conservatism of the Romantics can be seen as a reaction against the material changes of the 18th and 19th centuries. Byron and Shelley, both renowned 'Romantic' poets, belonged to the old aristocratic order that was being overtaken by the 'nouveau riche', middle and lower class millionaires created by the Industrial Revolution. As a group, the Romantics were profoundly anti-industrial, anti-materialism, and this informed their works, which stressed the value of the spiritual order of things over the materialism coming to surround them.

The Romantic Movement in 18th and 19th century England is identified as the period "to which we owe most of our current notions of landscape" (Newby 1979: 15). Prior to this time, the rural world

was concerned primarily with agricultural activities. By the mid-18th century however, the function of the land had changed, at least in the eyes of the ruling and landowning classes. Increasing importance became attached to the conscious appreciation of landscapes as a cultivated pastime, and to display a taste for such 'pleasing prospects' was seen as an indicator of high social status. This cultural change led to major physical changes in the countryside, as landowners devoted considerable resources to the creation of such 'pleasing prospects'. Agriculture, and other aspects of the working countryside, became an "intrusion", whose needs did not conform with the objectives of the landowners, and so it was banished or "hidden away behind newly planted belts of trees or artificially constructed mounds ... as an unpleasant reminder of the surrounding estate's necessary economic basis" (ibid: 15). Landowners employed landscape architects and gardeners who "invented what we have now come to accept as picturesque natural beauty. Nature was rearranged to comply with pictorial design and this contrivance has henceforth provided a standard by which all landscapes are judged" (ibid: 16). These architects used 'nature' as a tool, or as a canvas on which to construct their pictorial representations of the 'ideal English landscape' – 'pleasing prospects' which are protected and separated from agricultural functions to this day. In line with the 'anti-industrial' ethic which informed the construction of the 'rural idyll' neither working farms nor working people were allowed to intrude upon the landscape, except as the 'picturesque labouring classes', happy rustics, perhaps, or wise old country men – an English representation of the myth of the 'Noble Savage'. Aesthetic beauty came to be valued far higher than mere functionality. in the countryside, and anything that compromised the artist's vision was either hidden or removed.

It is quite obvious then, that the views of English 'natural beauty' which are "exclaimed over, admired, photographed and generally regarded as the epitome [of natural beauty] ... are the antithesis of works of nature. They are works of art." (ibid: 16). This highlights once again one of the major themes of this study, that 'nature' and 'natural' are terms which are used in highly contested ways. In this instance, to describe such 'pleasing prospects' as prime examples of 'natural beauty' is entirely erroneous – yet still such landscapes and scenic vistas are perceived to be works of nature, rather than of man, and they are valued all the more highly because of this.

Anderson (1995) has described rurality as "a reservoir of the natural". This conception, being another of the many elements perhaps of the 'rural idyll', also highlights one of the major sources of value that can be identified in the rural world. Anderson (1995), Benton (1995) and others note that

representations of 'nature' and 'the environment' can be commodified and sold on to the consumer. In fact, Goodin's "Green theory of Value" (1992) holds that 'naturalness' is of value in itself. Hence 'natural phenomena' are seen to be of more 'value' than human or cultural phenomena. While the philosophical implications of such a theory centre around notions of 'intrinsic value' being attributable to non-human entities, the practical implications of the theory are of more interest in this study. That is, the recognition that 'naturalness' and 'rurality' are considered to be of higher value than their opposites – 'artificiality' and 'urbanism' in this case. Barry (1999) for example, notes that different values tend to be attached to 'natural' and 'artificial', usually 'superior' and 'inferior' respectively. It follows then, that if 'naturalness' is to be more highly valued than 'artificiality', then the countryside (as a 'reservoir of the natural') is likely to be more highly valued than the town, another reflection of the 'reading-off hypothesis' discussed previously. As Blishen puts it, quite succinctly, "Town, Bad: Country, Good" (1984: 1).

Yet there is an obvious paradox in this line of thought. In the light of our understanding that the so-called 'natural' beauty of the British landscape has been created by artists, gardeners and landscape architects, we surely cannot persist in perceiving rural areas as natural environments, and valuing them as such? Yet we, as a society, do. This paradox echoes Rojek's description of the American wilderness parks as "stage representations of nature" (1993: 198) essentially created by man for man's use and pleasure – yet perceived and valued as the quintessential 'natural' environment.

Rennie-Short describes both 'countryside' and 'wilderness' as 'myths' while pointing out that such myths "are of fundamental importance in how societies 'see' their physical environments" (1991: 3), Importantly he emphasises that such myths can be a profound influence on the behaviour of individuals. As Shucksmith puts it, "the idea here is that 'rural' is an important concept in that it does have meaning because people think it has meaning" (1994: 128), and describes it as a "symbolic shorthand... - something which captures what they feel about rurality" (ibid: 128). The words 'rural' and 'rurality' used here could be replaced by any of our 'contested terms' – the same issue of meaning and perception, of 'myth-making' applies.

The deconstruction of the terms 'environment', 'natural' and 'nature' that has been discussed above falls broadly into a post-modern context. The post-modern take on such concepts holds that each

can be deconstructed to expose their roots – namely the different actors involved, claims to and types of knowledge, as well as the various cultural contexts in which the concepts are articulated and presented. Post-modernism seeks to question the often taken-for-granted meanings of these contested terms, and certainly this approach succeeds in demonstrating the plurality of meanings and sense that can be derived for each. Gandy (1996) doubts whether post-modernism is up to the task of offering any solutions to environmental problems, however, its value in this context lies in the emphasis placed on the relationality of 'environment' and 'nature', and by reminding us that the contested terms that we began with remain essentially that – unresolved and indefinable.

3.4 'Natural' Environments: the science of Ecology

There is however one understanding of the terms 'nature' and 'natural environment' that is dominated by a definable, rigorous and objective scientific approach: the science of Ecology, which is broadly the study of organisms and their 'environments'. Having explored the meaning of the terms 'natural' and 'natural environment' as they are used by social theorists, environmental groups and wider publics, Ecology can be seen representative of a 'professional' approach to evaluating the quality of the environment, and as a highly influential science whose principles and findings underpin much policy making, both within traditional bastions of power in the UK, and also the aims and objectives of environmental groups, whose influence increases year on year. In the context of this study we are interested in how ecologists use and interpret the word 'natural', as in 'natural environment', and to uncover whether scientific meanings ascribed to such contested terms differ significantly from those used in wider, non-scientific society.

Primarily, ecologists use 'naturalness' as an indicator of quality, along with 'rarity', 'diversity' and many others, in the identification and assessment of sites for conservation purposes. Usher (1986) reviewed the criteria used in 17 different evaluation studies, and found that 'naturalness' was used in 13 of them. For example, Tans (1974) suggested a priority ranking of sites on the basis of some five criteria, including naturalness. Sites that scored high in all criteria were deemed to be of "*Highest Quality* – [the] area approaches the *ideal community type*: no disturbance or disturbance not visible" (ibid: 35). Here we see clearly that ecologists equate 'natural environments' with 'ideal environments', and 'high quality environments' – and frankly, the more 'natural' the better. Ratcliffe's classic publication *A Nature Conservation Review* (1977) further established the concept of naturalness as an important indicator of environmental quality.

"Naturalness : While truly natural habitats (i.e. not modified by man) are highly valued, they are now rare in Britain and selection has, perforce, to deal largely with a wide range of semi-natural types. Habitats must nevertheless *satisfy a certain level of quality marked by a lack of features which indicate gross or recent human modification.* "

(ibid: 25, emphasis added).

Hence, as illustrated by Ratcliffe, above, and numerous sets of criteria for the evaluation and selection of ecologically valuable sites, 'naturalness', taken to be some measure of 'lack of human disturbance' is regarded as an important indicator of a 'high quality' habitat. Examples of assessment techniques using 'naturalness' as a criteria can be found in Usher (1986), Spellerberg (1992), Hunter (1996).

It is also important to consider Ratcliffe's definition in the context of our discussion of the 'human / nature dualism' outlined previously. The definition reveals that Ratcliffe subscribes to the belief that man and nature are separate entities: nature pristine can only exist in its 'natural' state when there is no evidence indicating 'gross or recent human modification'. Conservation science holds that a high 'score' of 'natural' implies that a site has not been influenced or modified by man's activities: it exists in a 'natural state'. The alternative doctrine that suggests that man can be considered to be part of a natural ecosystem, hence some form or degree of modification by humans is part and parcel of any 'natural' site. It is apparent how these opposing points of view are informed by opposing beliefs concerning the aforementioned positions of environmental realism (man as separate from nature) and environmental idealism (man as part of nature). Usher (1986) recognises that this is one of the difficulties of defining 'naturalness'. 'Naturalness' is an interesting word, and one worth considering. It does not exist in a conventional dictionary, suggesting that it is a specialist term – one developed within a particular discipline and for a particular purpose. Indeed, it is intended to describe a 'measure' or 'indicator' of 'how natural a site is'. But having previously outlined the essentially contested nature of the term 'nature' how can this be transformed into an objective measurement? What does it actually mean when a site scores 1 or 5 or 7 out of 10 for 'naturalness'? It is very difficult to conceive of an appropriate way to measure something as elusive

as 'nature', much less to defend the measurement is objectively and rigorously defined and applied.

On a practical level too there are difficulties. In order to score a site for 'naturalness' we need to know how, and to what degree man has modified the site in question, and we would need to know exactly what had been there prior to man's appearance in the region. As Ratcliffe himself points out, there are very few – if any – truly 'natural' sites in Britain today. Chris Smout, the renowned environmental and Scottish historian, makes a plea that conservationists keep in mind the history of the places they study. "It is notoriously difficult to speak in a country like Scotland of a 'natural landscape', a 'natural wood' or a 'natural environment' of any kind, if by that we mean a feature unmodified by people" (1997: 21) – and it would appear that this is exactly what Ratcliffe does mean. Usher (1986) points out that many so-called 'semi-natural' (and highly-valued) ecosystems are in fact the result of many years of active land management by man. Yet historical land use patterns are often conveniently overlooked or ignored by ecologists and conservationists for whom "it has become customary to speak of 'semi-natural' features' " (Smout 1997: 21). Such a descriptor could be applied equally to any feature that has aspects of the 'natural' about it, including even a garden lawn "with its rich flora of dandelions and daisies" (ibid: 21).

McIntosh (1985) provides a comprehensive account of the historic development of ecology as a science. Grumbine notes that in the early decades of the 20th century, ecology was a "descriptive, holistic science" dominated by ideas of "the balance of nature and succession towards a stable climax state" (1998: 599). By 1935 and the first use of the term 'ecosystem', "qualitative, descriptive ecology was being superseded by a more quantitative ecology of energy and nutrients flows, food chains and trophic levels. Natural history was out, mathematical models were in. The science of interrelationships was becoming subject to compartmentalisation and reductionism" (ibid: 599). In the UK scientists such as the "brilliant, disdainful and rigorous A.G. Tansley" (Smout 1991: 15) dominated ecological and scientific thought and progress. The dominant philosophical position held at this time was one of 'environmental realism'; man and his environment were believed to be completely separate entities, and studies of the 'natural system' were expected to produce "unambiguous, observable ... outcomes" (McNaghten & Urry 1998: 12). Ecological studies were to be pursued with "hard quantifiable biology", which resulted in it becoming an "arcane 'pure' science, almost antiquarian and backward looking, unrelated to the social sciences and so

irrelevant to society" (Smout 1991: 16). Hence, the science of ecology seemed destined, right from the first conception of the discipline to dismiss, and even vilify, humankind living within the 'natural world'. Turner, cited in Sinclair (1990) claims that the old "fire & brimstone" school of ecology was 'elegiac' – it was "essentially a eulogy of what we humans have destroyed: their science is a post-mortem, their myth is of a primal crime by which we are all tainted: the murder of nature" (ibid: 112).

Yet, despite the claims of objectivity on which scientific discourses such as ecology base their claims, it is not difficult to identify occasions where subjective judgements play a major role in supposedly 'scientific' investigation. Grumbine highlights how the paradox of this value / fact threshold came to prominence in the US where, when considering the preservation and management of national parks "scientists could not escape their cultural values. Science required them to portray Nature as dynamic, yet they advocated freezing nature into pre-European landscapes" (1998: 606). This overlapping of hard science and soft values makes this area of study extremely complex, stimulating and vital. As ecologist Frank Golley wrote, noting the tension between scientific ecologists and environmental activists, "It is not clear to me where ecology ends and the study of human ethics begins, nor is it clear to me where biological ecology ends and human ecology begins." (cited in Grumbine 1998: 612, who also questions whether science can be 'value-free). Golley is pointing out here that although there appears to be a divergence between the methods and objectives of science and society, in reality the two are closely linked, informing and reforming one another.

3.5 Environmental Quality & 'High Quality Environments'

The issue of environmental quality underpins many of the preceding discussions. The quality of the environment is frequently at the heart of the seemingly endless conflicts and debates concerning pollution and conservation, environmental protection and economic development. Can we really measure or otherwise define the 'quality' of as contested a notion as the 'environment'? Assuming that we can, and this is by no means a straightforward assumption, what level of environmental quality are we willing to accept or do we wish to achieve? Are we willing to accept a reduction in 'quality' for the sake of providing jobs or wealth through economic development? Such issues are central to the current debate over sustainable development. Furthermore, environmental quality

issues spill over into 'quality of life' issues, relating in turn to the level of satisfaction an individual feels about their lifestyle (Boearsema 1995; Jones, Caird & Ford 1984; Johnson & Rasker 1995).

Boersema points out that "the concept of 'quality' [has become] a key concept in the discussion of environmental problems" (1995: 99). Olshavsky (1985) defines perceived quality as a form of attitude, an overall judgement or evaluation of a service or object. 'Similarly Boersema quotes the International Standards Organisation definition that "Quality is defined by all those characteristics of a product or service which are necessary to meet all statutory or self-evident needs" (1995: 99). Environmental quality' then can perhaps be taken as referring to an overall judgement or evaluation of an *environmental* service or object.

Boersema goes on to make two important points about 'quality'. Firstly, quality is *relational*; it is directly related to the needs of the person using the product or service. Should these needs change, the perceived quality of the product or service – that is, the satisfaction that the person derives from it – will change as well. For example, technological changes may mean that a particular industry requires extremely clean water for its processes. As a result, the water supply that they have used up to this point may no longer suffice: the water quality is no longer satisfactory to the user. Secondly, quality is *relative*; it has no absolute size, and "something can only have (more or less) quality with respect to some point of reference" (ibid: 100). Using the previous example, the water quality requirements of the company have changed, with reference to their original needs. The precise criteria by which they measure water quality may have no meaning out with their own industry, yet this is their point of reference for declaring that the original water supply is no longer adequate. This second aspect of quality is particularly important in the context of this thesis as it introduces the notion of *measuring* environmental quality

How can we measure the quality of the environment? What criteria do we use? How can we possibly justify any one definition of 'high quality' when 'quality' appears to be an anthropocentric concept based on highly subjective criteria? 'Measuring' or 'evaluating' environmental quality (in one form or another) is at the heart of many environmental activities – from impact assessments to habitat management plans, from ESA schemes to the designation of nature conservation areas. Hendee notes that "The concept of wilderness ... has come to symbolise environmental quality, and support for wilderness has grown with the environmental movement" (1983: 93) Wilderness

can be seen as the ultimate "high quality 'natural' environment", and many of the issues that arise in connection with the designation and management of wilderness are similar to those arising for less totemic environments. As pointed out previously, although very little of Europe can truly be classified as 'wilderness', the emotions and values which the 'wilderness ethic' produces in people informs how they react to other areas perceived to be 'wild', and believed to share the same qualities found in 'wilderness'. This ties into the previous discussion of ecology: as a practical activity, ecology generally seeks to 'maintain' or 'conserve' the quality of the natural environment, with the ideal being a habitat untouched by human interference.

An issue that is important in the context of this study is the apparent divergence between the scientific 'expert' and the public 'user' in terms of how they perceive the quality of environments, such as wilderness. Shin & Jaakson (1997) carried out an extensive study of wilderness quality and visitor's attitudes in Oregon, USA. What is particularly interesting about this paper is the authors' attempt to identify the divergence between the scientific and the social attitudes towards, and perceptions of, wilderness quality. To explain the apparent divergence, they identified two ways in which the quality of the wilderness environment is judged: *subjective wilderness quality* and *objective wilderness quality*. The former refers to wilderness quality as perceived by users – that is, whether, and in what way, the site in question *looks* or *feels* like a wilderness. The latter refers to wilderness quality as it is perceived by wildlife managers, conservation biologists or defined for the purposes of legislation – generally understood in terms of 'ecological quality'. It is not surprising that Shin & Jaakson found considerable difference between the two perspectives, as did Hendee & Harris (1970) previously. This links back to the point made by Boersema (1995) previously – that 'quality' is relational and varies with the person making the judgement. The 'users' and 'managers' of wilderness are likely to make quite different uses of the environment in question, and their perception of its quality may vary with this use. Certainly, this position would find support in a post-modern context that rejects scientific 'grand narratives' and focuses instead on the self, the individual subject, and the ways in which notions of 'nature' and 'environment' are socially constructed. Thus, a post-modern perspective gives no more weight to the perceptions, attitudes or opinions of 'experts', than it does to any other individual. The perception of the 'ordinary' wilderness user is accorded the same respect as that of the conservation biologist or the ecologist, particularly in the context of evaluation.

In the context of this research, the 'experts' can be characterised by their professional interest in rural and environmental issues – rural planners, environmental and conservation scientists, for example. The possible divergence between 'experts' and 'lay people' is an important issue in this research, as will be made clear in chapter 5 (Methodology). At this point, however, it is useful to spend some time examining the different approaches of 'experts' and 'ordinary people' towards the evaluation of environmental quality in practice. Firstly, some 'expert' methodologies for measuring environmental quality will be examined. The important indicators of 'high quality' and 'low quality' will be made clear in each case, and the validity of the various approaches will be discussed briefly. Secondly, and in contrast, subjective understandings of environmental quality held by non-professionals will be discussed.

3.5.1 Contrasting Objective and Subjective Understandings of Environmental Quality

Although the intention is to compare the two understandings of 'environmental quality', what both approaches have in common is an aim to identify what environments, or aspects of particular environments, are worthy of being valued – identifying valued environments, in other words. Environments that are identified as being of high quality are, inherently, valuable and valued as such. Burgess & Gold (1982) describe very succinctly the contrast (and potential conflict) between the ways in which these two groups value environments. They quote a planning 'expert', who claims that planners are well aware of what people want from their environment ("privacy, a good view, a short journey to work, an appreciating property, convenient retail outlets, adequate recreational facilities and a beautiful landscape" (1982: 3). Burgess & Gold argue that, in fact, "we do not know what people want" (ibid) – because we do not know what constitutes their understanding of a good view or a beautiful landscape. When planning professionals seek to identify what are essentially highly personal, subjective understandings of environmental quality, they invariably resort to impersonal, objective methods – in the pursuit of rigorous, justifiable 'scientific' knowledge. Their techniques, and those of other 'experts', are briefly discussed below.

Objective Techniques for Measuring Environmental Quality

In chapter 2, the epistemological position broadly described as positivism was outlined. Techniques that aim to objectively 'measure' the quality of the environment in a scientific way fall firmly within this tradition. The transition of natural history ('natural philosophy') into the discipline of quantitative

values can and do contribute to ecological hypotheses and methods" (ibid: 108). A potential point of conflict is the risk that objective, scientifically based, ecological assessment techniques do not usually take account of what people actually value. Barry (1999) in his detailed exploration of the meanings of the terms 'nature' and 'natural' recounts a good example of this, in the form of a conflict which arose between local people and conservation agencies. Following the assessment of a woodland site's conservation value, a management plan was put into action to further 'increase' the ecological value of the site. One action was to fell a stand of several large and well-loved beech trees – much to the horror of local people, who admired and valued the trees greatly. The justification of the conservation agency in question was that the presence of the beech trees was not 'natural' – as 'alien' species within that particular biotic zone, they did not fit into the ecological profile of the site, and their removal was necessary if the 'quality' of the site was to be increased. Yet, for the local people, the 'value' of the site was in fact greatly reduced by the removal of the trees. This example demonstrates well the relational nature of 'quality' judgements and the contrast between expert and lay perceptions of environmental quality.

2. Environmental Pollution & Monitoring

In this widely used interpretation, environmental quality relates directly to the levels of pollutants found in soil, water and air resources. Essentially, high environmental quality equates with a low or non-existent level of certain pollutants. For example, the Scottish Environmental Protection Agency (SEPA), approaches the evaluation of environmental quality through assessment of:

- Air quality (emissions, acid precipitation, overview of emission trends);
- Land quality (soils, contaminated land, waste management, litter, radioactivity); and
- Water quality (groundwater, lochs, rivers, sewage pollution, urban drainage, industrial discharges, mining and abandoned mines, intensive agriculture and forestry, river habitat quality, coastal and estuarine waters, marine fish farming and aquaculture).

(from SEPA 1999)

SEPA is keen to use and develop Environmental Performance Indicators (EPI) to measure the quality of the environment. EPI's have been defined as "a value, derived from a measurable parameter, which provides information about the state of the environment beyond that directly associated with the measured parameter.' (OECD, cited in SEPA 1999). The intended approach is

to develop biological EPI's. For example, techniques have been developed to measure the detoxification responses of organisms exposed to a range of substances, such as organochlorines, hydrocarbons and certain heavy metals. These techniques effectively act as indicators of deleterious biological changes taking place in response to exposure to extremely low environmental levels of these toxic compounds. Again, such techniques are intended to provide rigorous scientific knowledge about the quality of the environment into which such toxic compounds and other waste products are being disposed, and to identify acceptable levels of such substances.

Yet, as Zube (1980) points out, our knowledge about environmental systems and environmental quality issues is far from complete, so an element of subjectivity inevitably enters. He quotes an example from the US that relates to the acceptable levels of bacteria in water used for recreational purposes. The standards themselves vary from 50 to 3,000 bacteria per 100 millimetres in different localities, which some researchers feel is too wide a wide range for safety (Kneese & Bower, cited in Zube 1980). Similar examples of such ambiguities can be found in the UK's approach to pollution control (see Chris Rose's *Dirty Man of Europe* 1990). At best, many pollution-monitoring systems are informed by scientific theory, while at worse they amount to no more than educated guesses. Furthermore, it can be argued that many so-called pollutants are not intrinsically 'bad'. Rather, it is a case of the 'pollutant' being in the wrong place at the wrong time – in much the same ways as the indigenous species of wildflower meadows are frequently eradicated by farmers who see them as 'weeds' with the potential to 'pollute' a commercial crop. Thus the whole concept of 'pollution monitoring' can be challenged as a subjective, rather than objective, practice – based on normative judgements made by 'experts' and dependent on ease of monitoring of certain indicators, as well as the ever-changing political context in which such agencies operate.

3. ***Landscape Quality and Evaluation***

Landscape designations in the UK include National Parks, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), Heritage Coasts and National Scenic Areas. A number of supposedly objective landscape evaluation techniques have been developed, with varying degrees of success. Despite these attempts it is unproven that numerical ratings of landscape beauty can adequately represent people's preferences for the landscape, their judgements of scenic beauty, or either (Wherrett 1998). Penning-Rowell (1974) provides an overview of landscape evaluation studies and argues that most of the methods used pay insufficient attention to the complex nature of landscape values,

whilst over-emphasising scenic attractiveness. Wherrett (1998) provides a more recent comprehensive review of the extensive literature relating to landscape evaluation.

In the case of landscape quality evaluation, we are perhaps moving away from a strictly scientific approach to environmental quality, and beginning to examine how wider society might evaluate the quality of the environment. Cole-King postulates that there are two major strands running through the environmental conservation movement in the UK. One of these is "associated with the aesthetic value of natural features, where description and evaluation rely not on the natural sciences but on subjective assessment of 'quality'" (1994: 140). Yet, as pointed out by Gilg (1985), no studies have fully answered the fundamental question of how people value landscapes: the meanings of a 'good view' and 'beautiful landscape' to which Burgess & Gold's planner referred are still not fully elucidated (1982). Lowenthal strongly criticises the techniques of landscape evaluation surveys, such as those used by professional planners. He claims that they are "often *supposed* to concern landscape tastes, often *claimed* to yield data about preferences, often *confused* with assessments of public opinion" (1978: 189) when in fact they teach us very little about "attachment to locales" and are no more than a "practical means to a policy end" (ibid). Haldane notes, in conclusion to his review of *The Aesthetics of the Environment*, "we do not as yet have a clear and complete account of the nature and value of the aesthetics of the environment" (1994: 105). Furthermore he suggests that "that human experience plays a constitutive role in environmental aesthetics" (ibid: 105), emphasising once more the need to incorporate subjective human 'experience' into the evaluative exercise, also emphasised by Daniel & Vining (1983) with reference to phenomenological models of landscape evaluation.

Critiques of Objective Assessments of Environmental Quality

Zube (1980) offers a general critique of the scientific approach to environment quality evaluation, pointing out that objective measures are rarely, if ever, derived without recourse to subjective judgements, as pointed out in the previous three examples. For example, when selecting which characteristics of the 'environment' to measure, scientists may not always choose the most appropriate ones. Rather, they might make a pragmatic choice to select the ones for which there are established measuring techniques. In the positivistic tradition, science 'measures' what can be measured: whether this represents the 'whole story' or not is not often overlooked. Environmental quality issues are particularly vulnerable to such criticisms as the complexity of the systems

involved is widely recognised, as is our limited understanding of them. Lowenthal (1978) too makes an important point that can be applied to all the above examples. Despite the claims of objectivity and scientific rigour upon which their validity is based, each technique can be challenged on the grounds of incomplete knowledge and inherent subjectivity. Yet the techniques continue to be used on a daily basis by 'professionals' in each of these fields. Lowenthal suggests there are two main reasons for this. Firstly, the techniques have been around and in use for a long time – in the case of landscape evaluation the techniques have been "sanctioned in scores of British planning studies" (ibid: 389). Similarly, habitat and site assessment techniques and criteria (naturalness, rarity, diversity, *etc.*) were developed for and by ecologists many years ago and the same criteria dominate still. Lowenthal's second, and more scathing, point is that "many readers erroneously conclude that the quantified technical apparatus of landscape evaluation [or ecological assessment or pollution monitoring] connotes scholarly respectability" (ibid: 389). In other words, if a technique *looks* suitably 'scientific' then it gains the reputation of being the correct and valid way to proceed.

Lowenthal makes clear his belief that such techniques, at least in the case of landscape evaluation, may well limit the usefulness of scientific techniques to elicit public values for the environment. Burgess, Limb and Harrison make a similar point, claiming that "within geography, the received wisdom would seem to be that 'ordinary' people, unlike environmental 'experts', are unable to describe their 'inchoate' feelings for landscape" (1988a: 309), and they attribute this failure to the inadequacy of the techniques used. Flynn & Pratt (1993) refer to certain methodological problems that occur with other techniques intended to elicit public values for environmental goods, namely contingent valuation and other economic approaches as developed by David Pearce and colleagues (Turner, Pearce & Bateman 1994; Pearce & Turner 1998). They claim that "scientific judgements might differ quite markedly from those of the public" (Flynn & Pratt 1993: 9), but the ability of the public to express these values in a contingent valuation (CV) study is only as good as their understanding of the issues at stake. Burgess, Clark and Harrison (1998) make a similar point, in their examination of respondent evaluations of a CV survey. They make a very convincing case for the rejection of CV as a valid technique for eliciting public values for various 'natural' features. CV techniques assume that nature and the environment can be segmented into specific 'items' about which respondents can make a judgement. Burgess *et.al.* suggest that in reality people do not think about 'the environment' in discrete 'bits', rather they conceive of it as a whole. The "reductive nature" of the CV task suits the purposes of planners and may fit easily into the

perceptions of scientists used to dealing with 'sites' or 'habitats', but does not adequately represent how people actually think about 'the environment'. The field of environmental economics attracts a great deal of criticism of this sort as a whole.

Midgeley notes that the word 'value' itself has become "somewhat polluted by its constant use in economic contexts and other cost-benefits calculations" (1997: 85). That is, for economists value equals price, whereas for the rest of the human race it likely means something quite different, and much broader. The 'broadness' (or 'fuzziness' or 'plurality') inherent in human values is not easily captured by CV, Cost-Benefit Analysis or other such techniques. This is unfortunate because professionals in the field have broadly accepted these techniques as appropriate planning and environmental management tools. It is entirely possible that such techniques are favoured for the same reasons that Lowenthal supposes certain landscape evaluation techniques to have found favour in relation to UK planning studies (above): they are used frequently in 'official' projects and appraisals and have become part of the professional research 'tool kit', and they have the appearance of 'good' techniques because they seem to be rigorous and objective. Ultimately, though, fail to do what they claim – to represent the views of 'ordinary people'.

The aim of this section has not been to discredit the attempts of scientists and professionals to develop techniques and methodologies to evaluate environmental quality. As Burgess and Gold (1982) emphasise, such efforts often represent worthwhile and well-meaning attempts to seek an understanding of public environmental values. Rather, the intention has been to point out some of the limitations and assumptions that underlie the use of such techniques, demonstrating that they cannot tell the 'whole story'. The limitations of these 'scientific' techniques have been demonstrated with a view to using an alternative – qualitative – methodology to investigate how people in wider society think about and evaluate environmental quality. It would have been very easy in a study of this kind, to focus attention on sites or locations that have previously been identified as being 'high quality 'natural' environments': many have already been identified within the study area by conservation agencies, including Sites of Special Scientific Interest, Special Areas of Conservation, Environmentally Sensitive Areas, Local and National Reserves and the like. However, as the example given by Barry (1999) makes clear, the values and evaluative judgements of 'experts' and local people do not always run parallel to one another. As the subjects of this study – rural entrepreneurs – are likely to hold values and attitudes closer to those of the wider population,

rather than those of ecologists and conservation biologists, it makes sense to try and explore what the former group perceive as a 'high quality environment'.

Subjective Assessments of Environmental Quality

As mentioned previously, Shin and Jaakson's examination of wilderness quality (1997) found that there seemed to be a significant difference between the way it was perceived by professionals (scientists and wilderness managers) and by non-professionals (wilderness users, publics). We will turn now to look at this latter group in the wider context of environmental quality. It is important that we do so, not simply in the context of this study outlined above, but also in that of the wider sustainable development debate. Schuyt (cited in Boersema 1995: 105) suggests that one way in which to change people's behaviour in order to achieve a more sustainable future is to change their 'image of the world', their 'world view'. It is clear that human perceptions of environmental quality are tied up in this worldview, rather than solely connected with 'environmental' issues like pollution and conservation. Zube suggests that "environmental evaluation [is] an activity in which we all engage, consciously or unconsciously, in making decisions about our everyday life" (1980: 15). So people evaluate the quality of the environment on a regular basis – but how do they do it? What constitutes a 'high quality environment' for them, and how can we identify it in any meaningful way?

Many attempts to answer these questions have been made, in a variety of fields. For example, in the on-going sustainable development debate, 'environmental quality' and 'quality of life' issues have received much attention, not least in relation to how to measure them. Rogerson, et.. al. (1989), for example, discuss some of the methodological issues involved in developing and using indicators to somehow measure quality – in this case 'quality of life'. This paper emphasises, as do many others, the importance of subjective human perceptions in quality assessments of all kinds, environmental and otherwise. Cutter (1985), for example, suggests that in addition to the more commonplace objective and subjective indicators, 'perceptual indicators' could be used to elucidate human perceptions in relation to quality if life assessments. The use of such 'perceptual indicators' has been somewhat formalised in the US with the development of "Perceived Environmental Quality Indicators" (Craik & Zube 1976, Craik & Feimer 1987). These indicators are intended to measure how people perceive the quality of certain environmental characteristics – irrespective of the objective 'reality' of the situation as measured by the regulatory agencies. This leads us to the question of perceptions and associated values. Harrison, Burgess and Clark (1999) suggest that

while individuals might have different personal 'meanings of nature' and might agree to differ on these perceptions, opposing values are not so easily overcome. They contend that conservation values are fundamentally concerned with rationalisations of *right or proper conduct* in relation to the living world. So it makes sense that any investigation of perceptions of environmental quality considers also environmental values; the former inform the latter, and, as we shall see, the latter guide and shape our actions and activities in relation to the environment in which we live.

3.6 Environmental Values

Zube (1980) claims that the process of environmental evaluation is intrinsically related to human values. He suggests that perceptions of environmental quality are not simply given, they are not a straightforward response to an 'environment' presented to the observer. Rather, they are linked to a complex and highly personal system of values – environmental and otherwise. While environmental science aims to be 'value-free' (though it is highly questionable whether such a position is possible; see Grumbine (1998) on the subjectivity inherent in 'biodiversity' and conservation biology), subjective assessments of environmental quality are inherently bound up with complex concepts relating to environmental values and ethics. The Department of the Environment recognised this, stating in their response to the *World Conservation Strategy* that environmental policy had to "take account of people's desires and fears. The environment is managed for people and judgements about quality of life are in considerable part subjective. We have to learn to take account of value judgements..." (1986: 55).

Values are difficult to research. Certainly, such subjective, elusive concepts do not lend themselves readily to objective methods of investigation. Human values exist in relation to a huge variety of issues. As Hunter puts it, "Values differ. Values change. Values differ between hungry people and well-fed people. Values change when a person who was hungry has eaten" (1996: 378). This observation reflects the points that Boersema (1995) made previously about 'quality'; that it is both relational and relative. Much the same could be said for values. The relational nature of values is highlighted when one considers the innumerable variations within the human condition that allow different values to develop: cultural differences, urban-rural differences, gender differences, socio-economic differences, age differences, educational differences and many others. Environmental values develop within the framework of all these 'differences' like all other values.

Western environmental values can be seen to have changed enormously during recent decades, relative to underlying social and cultural changes taking place in the Western world (Grove-White 1991, Pepper 1996). As Harrison *et. al.* put it "[conservation] values are embedded in social systems which generate their own value shifts over time – changing attitudes to wilderness and wildness for example, and to weeds and alien species" (1999: 87). So values vary with time and place, resulting in what Bridge, O'Neill & Cromie (1998) describes as a plurality of values, the recognition that individuals may hold many different values about the same entity – or the same environment.

Some of these values we have already examined; for example, the 'nature: good, man: bad' perception that holds 'nature' and 'natural' to be inherently more 'valuable' than anything man-made or artificial. Goodin describes this as the "'green' theory of value" (1992: 31), identifying specifically "Naturalness as a Source of Value" (ibid). The roots of this particular environmental value may have been inexistence well before the dawning of the so-called 'environmental age' but the *expression* of this value is now open to mass society to an unprecedented level. People express their sharing of this value in a range of ways, by becoming members of the ever-increasing range of 'environmental groups' or by changing their lifestyles to accommodate more 'environmentally friendly' behaviour. Such actions can be seen as an expression of changing values, relative to changing perceptions of environmental quality in society as a whole. A good - and somewhat ironic - example can be drawn from the field of nature conservation. Many marginal sites in the UK have been identified in recent years as the most 'natural', 'of high ecological value' and worthy of designation and protection from development. Yet in past times, these same areas were considered worthless – marshes, bogs, river valleys and gullies, cliffs and other places where commercial development or exploitation was not considered a viable proposition. As such, it is their very 'low quality' status that has protected them from development in the past, and as a result of changing perceptions of environmental value and quality, they are now considered to be highly valued environments. It is important to note is that the sites themselves have not necessarily changed in any material was, but that people's perceptions of them have. Another example: where once people believed that "Growth is good", now many believe that "Small is Beautiful" (Schumacher 1989). Where once people trusted and believed in the power of technology (and technologists) to overcome all environmental problems, now a doomsday scenario tends to dominate regarding man's use of the 'natural'. The likelihood of a truly catastrophic environmental

crisis continues to be debated, however, with recent publications such as *The Sceptical Environmentalist* (Lomborg 2002), suggesting something of a backlash against the ecological doomsayers of the last decade.

3.6.1 Signs, Symbols and Calico Cotton Shower Curtains: Selling Nature

An important issue, also the manifestation of a shift in cultural values, which was touched upon previously is the commodification and consumption of 'the environment' and 'nature'. Talbot, discussing some of the politico-economic issues relating to wilderness parks in the US, suggests that the "efforts of capital to manage a relation to nature in the sphere of consumption result in nature emerging as a 'stylised spectacle' packaged for easy consumption" (1998: 328). For many people 'Nature' has become just yet another leisure occupation – "one no longer [lives] in nature, one [visits] it as a tourist from the real world of the metropolis and the money economy" (Rojek 1993: 113). Within the 'sphere of consumption' nature reserves are seen as, "artificial habitats intended to mimic the natural environment, while safari parks offer the possibility of 'drive-through' nature" (Talbot 1998: 328). The physical manifestation of the human perception of 'town: bad, country: good' has resulted in the creation of outdoor 'sales points', places where people go to consume a nature that they feel can no longer exist in proximity to their 'normal lives'.

This commodification of nature takes place in other ways too. The back pages of wildlife or environmental magazines or journals includes advertisements for products and services that range from glossy wildlife and landscape photograph collections to authentic 'green wellies' and unbleached cotton shower curtains, via 'whale-watching' cruises and 'wilderness travel' opportunities, promising the chance to experience 'real nature' in various remote corners of the world. Environmental organisations, particularly the larger and wealthier ones such as Greenpeace, the World Wide Fund for Nature, and the Sierra Club, are in a position to take advantage of this situation. In an attempt to increase membership, revenue and (indirectly) political influence, such groups have turned increasingly to advertising and selling 'environmental products' to both provide finance and spread their message. Benton (1995) points out that during the 1980's such groups used direct mail campaigns and mailing lists in order to increase their memberships. Additionally, they developed and marketed products which were aimed at the new class of young, wealthy, upwardly-mobile and environmentally-conscious individuals: ranges of labelled products, books and journals, eco-travel programmes, 'green' credit cards and eco-friendly investment options. By

purchasing such products and services, people could 'consume' the environmental message being sold by these organisations. Benton perceptively highlights the paradox inherent in such activities: the guiding ideology of environmental organisations calls for the adoption of a "materially simpler lifestyle" yet they seek to spread their message and support their cause by peddling mass-produced items for public consumption – even the radical group EarthFirst! sells bumper stickers and t-shirts to urban 'eco-warriors'.

There is another important point to take from Benton's deconstructionist critique of environmental merchandising and the groups who participate – and that is to examine the purchasers of these 'environmental products'. We can ask: what do the people who buy such products get out of the deal? On one level, they have a new possession to enjoy – a book to read, wildlife photographs to examine or a Sierra Club mug from which to drink their organically grown fairly traded coffee. At another levels, however, such products can be seen as outward signs or symbols which reflect the image the buyer wants to project to the world at large. As Benton notes, "sign and image have merged with commodity" (1995: 12). In our post-structuralist world "what you get is not *just* what you see ... by purchasing a T-shirt, car or video, you purchase more than just an object, you buy the concomitant message of materialism" (ibid). And what message, what "concomitant message" does the environmental product carry with it? Benton suggests that in selling the 'environmental message' to the world, the "media managers have elevated both environmental ideology and products (especially tourism) to a socially desirable level. They have done so by manipulating images and emotions." (ibid: 13). Once again we return to the idea that has emerged repeatedly throughout this review – that images and symbols of 'nature' and the 'natural environment' are socially constructed, and that these constructions can be commodified and consumed. The idea of 'environmental commodification' relates closely to the post-modern theories introduced in chapter 2. Baudrillard (1981) refers to the 'sign-value' of objects, and describes this as a 'simulacrum of a simulacrum' (cited in Lash & Urry 1994: 14), indicating that in contemporary post-modern political economies 'objects' have been entirely removed from their original meaning. Thus, the value of the 'environmental' products in question lies not in their use-value, or even their exchange-value: rather, they are seen as 'signifiers' by those that purchase them, indicating perhaps that the purchaser shares socially-approved concern for 'The Environment', or is simply demonstrating old-fashioned 'good taste' in purchasing a 'special' product. The purchase of material goods has come to act as a comprehensive shorthand for the kind of people we are, or that we wish to be (or be seen as). Our

personal environmental can be clearly proclaimed to the rest of society through the purchase of certain objects, and thanks to the environmental movement, the choice of 'object' through which to display our commitment to 'The Environment' has never been greater.

The important points to take from this – necessarily brief – review of environmental values is that they are highly personal and subjective, that they may evolve with changing circumstances, and that they can be held strongly enough to guide and shape individual behaviour. As Harrison *et. al.* point out, perceptions and meanings relating to the environment are powerful and influential in that they directly inform values – and values are in turn the "reasons given for actions" (1999: 87). Values help to explain what we do and why, they are "fundamentally concerned with the rationalisations of right or proper conduct in relation to the living world" (ibid). It is hoped that our proposed investigation of perceptions of environmental quality will help to uncover some of these important values, which guide the actions of the individuals living and working in the study area.

3.7 Conclusion

As the preceding review demonstrates this subject area is not straightforward to discuss. The contested meanings of words and concepts such as 'environment', 'nature' and 'natural' overlap, contradict and reinforce themselves in a myriad of ways. For all the (failed) attempts of scientists and social theorists to define the 'essential truth' of such concepts, it is undeniable that they represent powerful cultural symbols, as witnessed in the discussion of 'environment as wilderness' and 'environment as countryside'. As our exploration of some of the philosophical arguments surrounding the so-called 'nature / man dualism' showed, there are many fundamental issues which leading thinkers in the field of environmental philosophy cannot agree upon. It could be that such a lack of consensus mimics the conflicts of ideologies and different ways of seeing the 'truth' of environmental values that are so apparent at the ground level between environmentalists, developers, and local people.

We also looked at how people think about certain 'environments' – particularly how environments such as 'wilderness' and 'the rural' are socially constructed, commodified and consumed, and we situated these ideas within a post-modern context, which emphasises the importance of the individual, as opposed to the 'expert'. As Barry points out, "'environment' and related terms are used not just in a descriptive sense, that is dealing with the facts, but ... *they are also used to*

express, justify or establish particular values or judgements, courses of action and reaction, policy prescriptions and ways of thinking" (1999: 12, emphasis added). He also suggests, "while the environment is used to simply describe the world, ... it is also used to prescribe how the world *ought to be*" (ibid). This is a pertinent observation, and echoes comments by Shucksmith (1994: 127) when he points out that "the rural as social representation ... is important in a creative and transformative way because the fact that people have these beliefs, these symbols to do with rurality, has consequences for action and the exercise of power". Values, beliefs and understandings are crucial to developing an understanding of what people do, and more importantly why they do it – in any situation. In the broad context of rural development, an understanding of what guides and motivates the actors concerned may help us reconcile the seemingly opposed needs of rural communities in terms of environmental protection and economic development.

CHAPTER 4

Sustainable Rural Development: economy, environment and society in rural Scotland

4.1 Introduction

This section of the literature review aims to look in some detail at the ongoing debate about sustainable development in rural Scotland, examining the three foci of economy, environment and society. For the purposes of this current study, the importance of small- and medium-sized enterprises is examined in the context of sustainability, focusing on the seemingly irreconcilable needs for environmental protection and economic development. Broadly speaking, the aim is to set the context for the current study, and to locate it within the existing rural development literature.

The structure of this section of the literature review is as follows. We will begin with a broad examination of the 'sustainable development' debate in the context of rural Scotland. In order to highlight the subjective, normative nature of the 'sustainability' concept some of the conflicts that can arise when attempting to somehow 'achieve' sustainability in practice are explored. The anthropogenic focus of evolving sustainable development policies is highlighted, by discussing the association between 'sustainability' and 'quality of (human) life' made by both national governments and local communities. Rural employment issues are discussed, focusing on the changing nature of the rural economy. The associations between employment, enterprise, and the economy, are explored, to highlight the importance of small- and medium-sized businesses to the rural economy. The 'Entrepreneur' as a social actor is then examined from two research perspectives: the 'entrepreneurial personality' and the 'entrepreneurial environment'. Finally, a review of research relating to 'environmental enterprise' is tied to the idea of 'rural enterprise' and the overlap between the two is discussed.

4.2 Sustainable Rural Development: an Introduction

In order to set the context for this study, we will first review the concept of 'Sustainable Rural Development', with particular reference to the Scottish situation. The 'Sustainable Development Debate' has come to influence developmental policy at all levels of government, both in the UK and elsewhere. In the UK, policy-makers and advisory agencies in all sectors now frame their policies in terms of 'sustainability' and the pursuit of development that is 'sustainable'. A good example of this is the recent Highlands and Islands Enterprise (HIE) Strategy for Enterprise Development which proclaims that "Sustainable development is central to the HIE Network strategic vision..." (1999: 3). But what is 'sustainable development' and what does it entail? Is it the same as the old 'economic development', simply dressed up in new, green clothes to make it more palatable to our new, environmentally aware society? Or does it represent the emergence of an entirely new development paradigm – one where human communities and the non-human world are valued as highly as economic profits, and their needs taken into account at all stages of any development plan?

4.2.1 The Sustainable Development Debate

Since the 1960's and 1970's, the ideals of the free market and the realities of living in a market economy have been increasingly questioned. Economic policy during the post-war years was dominated by the push to maximise production and consumption, in the belief that this would also maximise societal well-being. During the 1960s and 1970s however, it became increasingly apparent to many that economic progress was not delivering an optimum level of public well-being or personal satisfaction. Parkin (1996) notes that until this time the objectives of economic development focused almost exclusively on the taken-for-granted assumption that a "growth in human well-being may only be achieved through increased material consumption" (1996: 143). She goes on to cite Herman Daly's "Index of Sustainable Economic Welfare", which was originally developed as a measure of 'quality of life'. When the ISEW was tracked against the GNP (used as a measure of economic well-being) of the UK, it showed that despite increasing economic growth, quality of life for UK citizens was actually declining (Figure 4.1).

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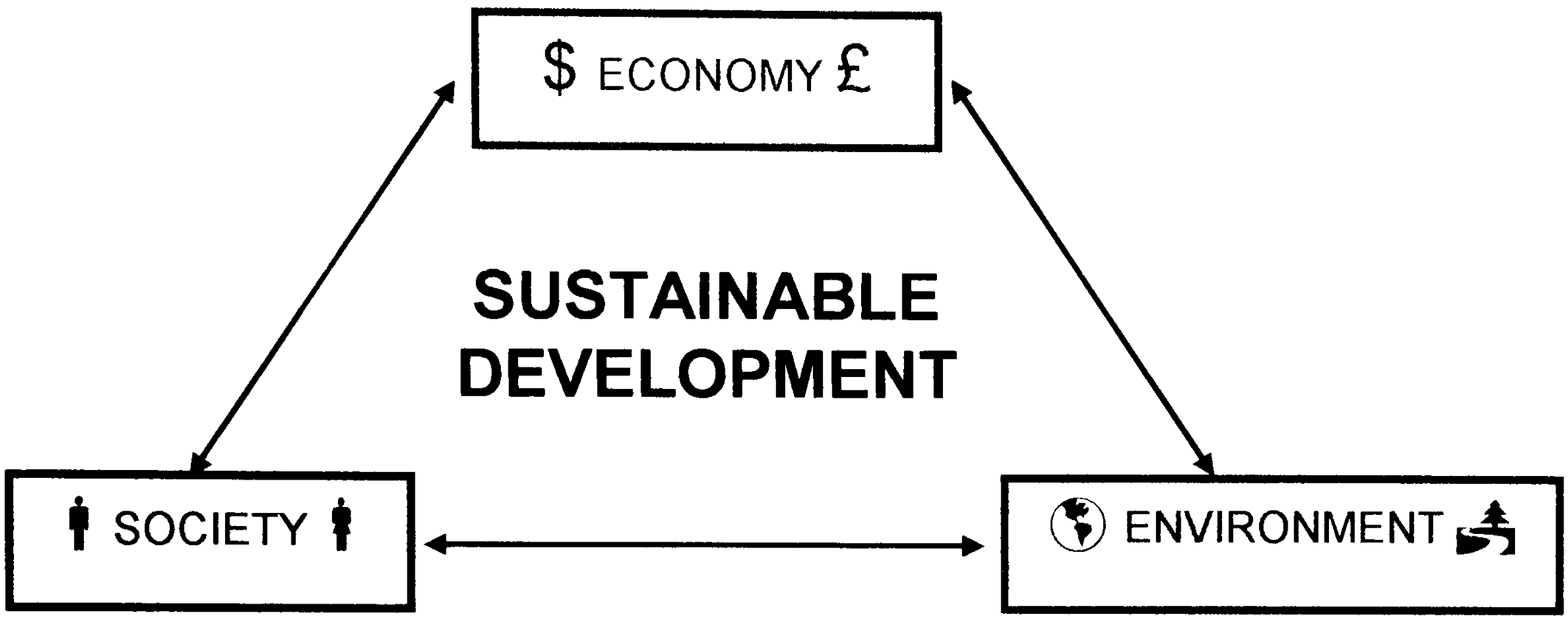
same way as 'motherhood and apple pie' – universal 'good' things. As Selman points out, these principles have "a ring of indisputable authority", (ibid: 1): they are hard to fault at a general level, but notoriously difficult to apply in practice, for reasons that will be discussed later.

Figure 4.2 The Three Elements of Sustainable Development



Sustainable development can be visualised as comprising three interlocking components as follows (Figure 4.2):

- *Society*: social well-being for communities, throughout the world, both now and in the future;
- *Economy*: economic viability to meet peoples' needs for goods and services, and quality jobs;
- *Environment*: maintaining the integrity of the environment, enhancing the services and resources it provides.

In theory, if an action or policy option is economically viable, if it benefits people both now and in the future, and if it improves the environment – it can be called 'sustainable', in that all three requirements of sustainability have been satisfied. On the other hand, if an action is economically profitable, but has a negative impact on communities, or on the quality of the natural environment, it cannot – in theory – be labelled a 'sustainable option'. It is very difficult to disagree with the broad concept of sustainable development, when it is described in these terms. However, putting the concept into practice has resulted in many protracted development conflicts, some examples of which are outlined below.

4.2.2 Conflicting Ideals: Environment & Enterprise

In practice, it has proved incredibly difficult to reconcile the needs for environmental protection with the pursuit of economic development, and related job and wealth creation opportunities. Despite many claims that the introduction of environmental protection policies can in fact improve the overall economic performance of a region (for example Hueting 1996, Goodstein 1996), the perception that environmental protection can only be achieved at the expense of jobs and / or wealth creation is hard to disprove. A look at the 'Campaign Diary' page of a recent edition of *The Ecologist* journal (p. 12-23, June 2000) demonstrates this point amply. The readership of the magazine is encouraged to participate in a range of international 'Campaigns', some examples of which are described below. Readers are called action in a range of ongoing campaigns including:

- Opposition to the development of open-cast coal-mining in eastern India, which threatens the habitat of endangered tiger species, as well as destroying 170,000 km of forest and expelling local tribal people from their lands;
- Opposition to oil-related development on the coast of western India which threatens "fertile coastal breeding grounds";
- Exposing and challenging the 'green-washing' of the nuclear industry in the UK and France;
- Opposing illegal oil development in South America which threaten the viability of the Maya Biosphere Reserve in Guatemala;
- Opposing plans to construct a road and gas pipeline through the Ukok Plateau (UNESCO World Heritage Site) in Siberia, home to the remaining population of snow leopards in the area;
- Supporting a moratorium that will prevent logging, the development of mines, oil and gas-related exploration, the expansion of ski areas, and motorised recreation in 'roadless' areas of national forest land in the US.

The final 'Campaign Note' ends with the statement, "conservationists are hoping that [a moratorium] will prohibit all destructive activities in all national forest roadless areas". Unfortunately, one man's 'destructive activity' is often the *economic* activity that puts food on another man's table, and money in his wage packet. However often environmentalists claim that conservation and environmental protection do not cost jobs, their claims are do not seem to be backed up by common experience – especially the experiences of the loggers, the miners, and the oil-industry workers who believe that their livelihoods are being put at risk by those who wish to preserve or protect the natural environment.

The examples given are of environmental conflicts occurring at an international and global scale, yet when one considers conflict at the local level, it becomes apparent that disagreement occurs over similar issues. For example, Scottish Natural Heritage recently proposed the designation of an area on the west coast of Scotland as a protected area, by virtue of its perceived high ecological and scenic value. No doubt this was part of their overall strategy to ensure the 'sustainable use and protection' of natural heritage resources. However, the plan for the designation was strongly resisted by the local communities – so much so that on one memorable occasion, the police were called to attend a public meeting where the project was being launched. The local people were concerned that the designation would severely limit commercial activity within the designated area. Their protest against the designation was such that the proposal was eventually dropped by SNH. There is no doubt that the manner in which the designation was presented to the local communities (as a *fait acccompli* with no prior public consultation) was a factor in the decisive reaction of the local communities. However, a major element of the conflict was the perception of local people that their 'right' to earn a living in the area was being restricted in order to 'protect' the 'environment'. Conflicts about environmental designations tend to be highly polarised disputes that pitch the need to 'protect' the environment directly against the need for jobs and the commercial interests of local people. Selman points out that, even at the local level, environmental issues are seen as "'wicked' problems, in which equally legitimate interests will always be in conflict" (1996:11). Resolving such conflicts is never straightforward as each side can (and does) claim the moral high ground.

4.2.3 Social Constructions of Sustainability

As Bryden & Shucksmith point out – and the conflicts detailed above demonstrate – sustainability is proving to be a "chaotic and contested concept" (1999: 18). Interest in sustainability is so broad, it sometimes appears that everyone has debated what it means, "from government ministers to people who live in trees and have dogs on strings" (Shell Expo 1998:1). It has become a catch-phrase, a "popular slogan" (Worster 1993: 144) used by different people in widely differing circumstances. Examples given by Bryden and Shucksmith range from the supposedly '*unsustainable*' reliance of hill farmers on EU subsidies, to calls to "*sustain* the Gaelic language" (1999: 19). Similarly, because sustainability is seen as a 'good thing', it is frequently invoked by opposing groups debating a single issue. For example, an environmental group that opposes the construction of a road through SSSI woodland might argue that such a project demonstrates a 'non-sustainable' approach to the environment. The developer of the road, on the other hand, might

put forward arguments for the development of 'sustainable transport networks' to support his case. Both are appealing to the value, the *goodness* or *rightness* inherent in the 'sustainable development' concept – but they are each using widely varying interpretations of what it actually means. These interpretations are uniquely derived from each group's unique values and objectives.

Bryden & Shucksmith (ibid) quite correctly attribute such conflicts to the *normative* nature of the concept. There are no absolutes; sustainable development is essentially socially constructed and can mean all things to all men. Midgely, highlighting the issue of 'moral pluralism' in relation to sustainability, points out that "human rationality is not a monoculture, a simple system with a single aim" (1997: 94). Thus, both the environmentalists and the road builders of the previous example can claim that, through their actions, they are supporting sustainable development. To each group, their objectives, and the reasoning behind them, makes perfect sense. Yet, because their values, attitudes and motivations are so different, and their respective interpretations of sustainability too, they come into direct conflict. It is the normative nature of the sustainability concept that makes such conflict inevitable between groups with different values and aims. Ultimately, sustainability is as much an ethical and cultural issue as it is a scientific, political or economic one.

This has important consequences for those who are attempting to somehow 'achieve sustainability'. Bryden & Schucksmith observe that, "decisions [on how to achieve sustainable development] ... do not depend on scientific calculation or experiment ... but ultimately on the resolution of different values through legitimate democratic and participatory systems of governance" (1999: 24). Achieving sustainability becomes less about making clear, scientifically or economically determined choices, and more about whose values make it into the political arena, to be taken up by policy makers – 'who can shout the loudest', a cynic might say. Issues of political and societal hegemony undoubtedly lie near the centre of any debate on a 'sustainable future'. Unfortunately, such topics lie out with the subject matter of this review. Seymour et. al. (1997) discuss some of these issues in detail, describing the changing position of 'power-elites' in the countryside, specifically the shifting balance of power between farmers and 'environmentally-aware' incomers to rural areas. Selman (1996) suggests how to approach sustainable development on a local level in a practical way, while Bryden & Shucksmith (1999) make a convincing case for the need to develop an inclusive, participatory approach to resolving conflicts.

4.2.4 Environmentalist Critiques of the Sustainable Development Ideal

Bryden & Shucksmith have drawn our attention to the normative nature of the sustainable development concept, and have made the point that it can mean 'all things to all men'. In many ways the roots of the concepts lie in the environmental movement, which might explain why to many sustainability is seen as a 'green' issue. As described previously, prior to the Brundtland Commission report of 1987, there had been an increasing level of concern and awareness in Western society about the environmental costs and consequences of pursuing economic development (Pepper 1996, 1984). Environmentalists predicted that the world was teetering on the brink of an environmental catastrophe, brought about by man's greed, and his alienation from, and disrespect for, the natural world (Meyer 1996, Goudie 1981). When the concept of sustainable development emerged globally in 1987, with its talk of 'carrying capacity' and other environmental terms, many environmentalists felt that, finally, their concerns had been acknowledged and that environmental protection would now become a major policy issue at both the global and national level. Having apparently overcome the traditional belief that only accelerating economic development could provide for human well-being, it was hoped that the needs of the environment would be accorded at least as much importance as economic issues. For many, however, the current pursuit of sustainable development falls well short of these ambitious aims. Donald Worster, environmental historian, describes the current sustainable development discourse as no more than a "politically acceptable kind of environmentalism" (1993: 154). He suggests three specific flaws in the sustainable development ideal, which are worth mentioning here as they represent the views of many environmentalists, and others, who have become disillusioned with the concept of the sustainable development debate, not least the many protestors and campaigners gathered in Johannesburg as this thesis is written (World Summit on Sustainable Development, Johannesburg, September 2002). Worster outlines his criticism thus:

- The current sustainable development ideal is based firmly on the understanding that the natural (nonhuman) world exists primarily to provide material resources and services for the human species. No intrinsic value is accorded to 'nature' or to nonhuman species: the 'our' and 'we' that appears on every page of the Brundtland report refers strictly to humans.
- Although there is some acknowledgement that these natural goods and services may be limited, the sustainable development ideal assumes that we have the ability to accurately identify the 'carrying capacities' of natural ecosystems, and are thus able to exploit these resources accordingly to their 'safe limits'. In turn this assumes that natural systems are

stable, predictable and fully comprehended by scientists: this is an optimistic claim considering our incomplete scientific knowledge, and widely developing theories of natural systems as essentially chaotic and unstable (Botkin 1990).

- The ideal of sustainable development does not challenge the traditional world-view of progressive, secular materialism, and associated institutions including capitalism, socialism and industrialism are neither scrutinised nor expected to change

(From Worster 1993: 153-154)

Worster, and many others, believe that any 'solution' to the problems of social inequity and environmental destruction will require no less than a complete transformation of human attitudes to nature, specifically the emergence of "an environmentalism that talks about ethics and aesthetics, rather than resources and economics, that places priority on the survival of the living world of plants and animals regardless of their productive value, that cherishes what nature's priceless beauty can add to our deeper-than-economic well-being" (1993: 144). As outlined previously, the doctrine of 'deep ecology' suggests that man needs to move away from an anthropogenic outlook, which values only the utilitarian or aesthetic aspects of nature. Instead, nature and all non-human species should be protected and respected by virtue of their 'intrinsic' value. Devall & Sessions claim, "Equating value with 'value for humans' reveals racial prejudice" (1985: 33). Many other researchers are currently exploring these ideas. Tim Ingold (2000) for example, has explored the different beliefs of various indigenous people regarding the relationship between man, animal and environment that are very different to our own. Yet, despite these innovative and free-thinking approaches, it cannot be denied that sustainable development, in its current conception, is very much about 'value for humans', especially 'value for human quality-of-life'.

4.2.5 Sustainable Development & Quality of (Human) Life

At present there appear to be two important foci for sustainable development at the local level. As shall be discussed below, 'quality of life' has become one of the main themes around which local efforts to promote and achieve sustainability are centred. This represents a largely *anthropogenic* perspective: it is human quality of life that is of concern. Certainly, this theme is well represented in the range of local authority 'sustainability action plans' in the UK. The Local Government Management Board (LGMB 1996) who provided early 'blueprints', guides for local authorities seeking to develop and implement sustainable practices certainly focused heavily on this aspect.

An examination of LA21 Plans developed by local authorities throughout the UK shows that 'Quality of Life' has in many cases become the 'guiding light' for sustainable development planning and practice at the local level. This is reflected at the national level in this quote from the Government's own sustainability website. In response to the question, 'What is sustainable development?" the reply is "a better *quality of life* for everyone, now and for generations to come (HM Government 2000). The local authority which oversees the study area for this current study is Perth & Kinross Council, so a brief examination of how they are approaching sustainable development and associated issues is appropriate, although it must be borne in mind that this is not intended to be representative of a general UK-wide approach. Yet, this is a useful example, because it highlights the point that human 'Quality of Life' has been identified as the first priority of sustainability in this case – not environmental protection *per se* (see Box 4.1 below).

The second theme to emerge at the local level could be said to be broadly 'green' or 'environmental', and certainly it appears to be concerned primarily with conservation and heritage

Box 4.1 **Perth & Kinross Council: Sustainable Development and Quality of Life**

The focus of the most recent 'Community Plan' produced for Perth & Kinross region, is 'Quality of Life' for its inhabitants as explained by the chief executive in his introduction to the aforementioned plan.

> "The greatest asset of Perth and Kinross is the quality of life the area can offer. The main components of this are the variety of natural environments and recreational opportunities, the community, leisure and cultural facilities available, the area's location and transport networks, the range of employment opportunities and the relatively low cost of public services."
> (http://www.pkc.gov.uk/chief_executive/context.htm)

This focus on 'Quality-of-Life' is re-emphasised in the Council's Environmental Policy:

> "Sustainability and Local Agenda 21
> Deliver environmental, economic and social services in a way which aims to enhance the quality of life for everyone in the community whilst protecting the environment both now and for future generations."
> (http://www.pkc.gov.uk/env_consumer/envpolicy.htm)

In 1999, the Perth & Kinross Quality-of-Life Trust was formed with the specific aim:

> "to improve the quality of life of the inhabitants of Perth and Kinross area, based on the values and principles of sustainability"
> (http://www.pkc.gov.uk/strategic_policy/trust.htm)

A 'sustainable community', furthermore is described as one in which "social, cultural, health and well-being aspects of life, economic side and environmental side are equally balanced and develop together". The Quality of Life Trust is heavily involved in the 'Better Place to Live' Project, a series of 'fairs' which have been held in Perthshire communities with the aim to "raise the understanding of sustainability among the general public and local groups, and support local awareness raising and discussion. It will help communities develop local plans and projects that will promote sustainable communities and an improved quality of life into the 21st Century." So, in this way, local people in P&K communities are being encouraged to tackle the challenges of 'sustainable development", and the 'carrot' being dangled is their own improved 'quality-of-life'.

protection, specifically of the nonhuman world. The concept of 'Biodiversity' became a working component of the overall sustainable development strategy in the UK when it became a signatory to the Convention on Biological Diversity at the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro in 1992. The main objective of the UK Biodiversity Action Plan is "to conserve and enhance biological diversity within the UK and to contribute to the conservation of global biodiversity through all appropriate

mechanisms" (Department of the Environment 1994: 1). At one level the justification for creating and implementing Local Biodiversity Action Plans (LBAPs) is 'conservation' of 'biological diversity, which appears to represent a non-anthropogenic objective. In fact, the "challenge is to change attitudes and to create a wider awareness of the value of biodiversity and its relationship to our social and economic life as part of a wider strategy for sustainable development" (Scottish Biodiversity Group 1999: 1). Thus, the underlying aim of LBAPs is to contribute to the development of sustainable living practices – not the protection of the 'natural environment' because of any inherent 'value' that is believed to exist in the non-human world, recognition of which is sought by Worster (above). This is emphasised in the Scottish Office information leaflet *Biodiversity in a Nutshell* that seeks to explain some of the meanings and ideas that underpin biological diversity. They include: 'cultural heritage' and its importance to the tourist industry; economic value through 'natural resource' based industries; as a provider of natural services and products and, as part of sustainable development, growth "today that does not deprive the *quality of life* of future generations" (Scottish Biodiversity Group 1997: 1, emphasis added).

The two current paths down which sustainability at the local level is being driven can be summarised as 'anthropogenic' (Local Sustainable Development Action Plans) and 'environmental' (Local Biodiversity Action Plans), and it appears that despite the green connotations of the word 'biodiversity', both paths lead to improved quality of life for humans. In the UK, despite an initial link with environmentalism, sustainable development issues do not necessarily focus directly on the protection or preservation of environmental resources, but rather on how such resources can be best used for the benefit of human communities. Preservation, conservation and protection are, of course, options for debate that are offered through the LBAP process, but they are not taken for granted. In the light of Worster's critique pertaining to the flaws of the sustainable development ideal, it is unlikely that the development of LBAPs will go far to redress the imbalances that he perceives.

The current anthropocentric focus of the sustainable development ideal is an important point to make in the context of this current research. Because we are concerned with issues of environmental quality and 'the environment', it is important to state quite clearly that the understanding of sustainable development that is being adopted here is clearly anthropogenic – it is concerned with humans, and how they live. This fits in closely with the perspective adopted by

local and national governments, and other policy makers who have influence over the subjects of this research – rural entrepreneurs. Furthermore, this approach is in line with the generally interpretative, humanist perspective of this study. The criticisms of Worster and others that sustainable development is basically traditional growth economics dressed up in fashionable 'green' clothing cannot be discounted, and the picture they paint of a world where humans can truly live in harmony with 'nature' and all that word comprises, is a worthy ideal to strive for. At the present time, however, it remains an elusive dream, and for now the "ambiguities, compromises and smooth words of sustainable development" (1993: 155) must provide the context for this current study.

4.3 Small- and Medium-sized Enterprises

The aim in this section of the literature review is to examine small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), specifically in the context of rural development in Scotland. As shall be made clear, the promotion of enterprise has been targeted as a way to make rural areas 'more sustainable' (the reasons for wishing to do so are outlined in further sections), and an understanding of the phenomenon of small business start-up will set the context for this current study. Firstly, a definition of the terms 'small business' is attempted, as well as other widely used terms such as 'enterprise', and 'entrepreneur'. The importance of SMEs in the rural and national economy is examined. Finally, we shall review current research pertaining to the entrepreneur himself, from both a personal perspective and a wider environmental perspective.

4.3.1 Talking about Enterprise and Entrepreneurs

Firstly, it is important to note that in enterprise research certain commonly-used terms are often applied synonymously. 'Entrepreneurship' and 'enterprise', for example, are often taken to mean the same thing, as are the descriptions of 'enterprising' and 'entrepreneurial' behaviour. Similarly, when we talk of enterprise and enterpreneurship the (often unspoken) focus is on 'small business' and specifically, 'small business start-up'. Bridge, O'Neill & Cromie (1998) make an interesting attempt to account for this confusion. Focusing on the meanings of 'enterprise', they suggest that there are two commonly held views of enterprise, following the approach suggested by an earlier OECD Monograph (OECD 1989). The first is the "narrower view of enterprise" (Bridge *et. al.* 1998: 23), which relates directly to "entrepreneurship – business creation and development" (ibid). This is a specific meaning of enterprise that, they suggest, derives from the work of early economists,

most notably Schumpeter. Schumpeter (1934) believed that entrepreneurs were the key to wealth creation and distribution in society, by way of the dynamic cycle of 'creative destruction' that they induced. Although this theory was not popular in its time, it has since come to be widely accepted. Bridge *et. al.* suggest that, in this context, "the words enterprise and entrepreneurship can be synonymous" (1998: 25). Furthermore, they also note that 'enterprise' can be taken to mean a "unit of business, the process of business start-up, and of business growth and development". Thus, the narrow view of enterprise is directly associated with the form of behaviour directed towards the successful creation and development of business, hence the close connection between enterprise, entrepreneurs and small business start-up.

The other view of enterprise espoused by Bridge *et. al.* is the 'broad view'. This deals more widely with the subject of enterprise, and particularly with those who are 'enterprising'. Within this view of enterprise, we are concerned with the attributes and resources which comprise an 'enterprising individual' and their chosen 'enterprise'. Thus, research in this area has focused more closely on individuals – and countless attempts have been made to adequately describe 'the entrepreneur', usually by producing a set of defining attributes, and the resources that such individuals have at their disposal. This aspect of 'the entrepreneur' will be discussed in some detail in a later section.

The two views of enterprise can be summarised as below:

Narrow View
Enterprise = Entrepreneurship = Starting a business, Being in business and Growing a business

Broad View
Enterprise = Innovative attributes and behaviour (i.e. enterprising behaviour)

Source: Bridge, O'Neill & Cromie (1998: 34-35)

It is important to be aware of these different meanings and understandings of the terms 'enterprise', 'entrepreneurship' and 'small business', particularly as they will vary in use between individuals and organisations. In part, this variation is what makes research into enterprise so stimulating and challenging.

The aims of this chapter, in the context of the above discussion, are to explore some aspects of past and current research into enterprise and entrepreneurs. Because the research area is so varied, particularly so since the subject has hit a kind of 'boom time' as regards research activity, it is necessary to be somewhat selective in this review. We shall begin with an examination of SMEs, discussing how they may be defined, and their importance in relation to employment creation and economic development. We shall then go on to review the Scottish situation, paying particular attention to the Business Birth Rate for Scotland (BBRS) report, and its follow-up, which give a good indication of the important issues for SMEs in Scotland. We shall then move to take a more rural focus, examining the importance of SMEs in a rural context, and looking at the many challenges facing potential entrepreneurs in rural Scotland. Finally we shall examine two different approaches to studying entrepreneurs, which could broadly be characterised as the 'personality approach' and the 'environmental approach'. This will lead us into the final section of the literature review, which focuses on the 'natural environment' as a resource and influence on rural entrepreneurs.

4.3.2 Defining an SME

Small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) – small firms – exist the world over. Storey points out, "in the European economy more than 95% of firms are in fact small, and these small firms provide more than half of all jobs in the EC" (1994: 7). Yet, despite the apparent importance of small firms, research about them, and the 'entrepreneurs' who create them, is relatively limited in comparison to that covering other areas of management and business. Deakins notes that, in conventional economic research and theory, "the term entrepreneur is noticeable only by its absence" (1996: 8). A single, uniformly acceptable definition of a 'small firm' does not yet exist, and attempts to estimate accurately the number of such firms in the UK are confounded by the fact that only a limited number of them are registered with the state authorities. Yet, in the context of this research, it is necessary to identify the importance of SMEs in the UK economy, particularly in terms of their "importance... as a mechanism for job creation... and the long-term development of the economy" (Storey 1994: 7). Certainly, as attention has focused more strongly on this particular aspect of the SME sector, greater attention has been paid to both theories of business start-up, and to the entrepreneurs themselves.

Numerous attempts have been made to define small firms in the UK. The approach of the Bolton Committee, which was set up in 1971 to consider the role of the small firm in the national economy (HM Government 1971), was to develop two definitions; one 'economic' and one 'statistical'. This approach has been roundly criticised by various authors on several different grounds (see Storey 1994: 9-13, who describes it as a 'hotchpotch of definitions'). The Committee's definitions were seen to be too complex, and too ambiguous. They used a multiplicity of economic criteria ranging from employee numbers, to turnover levels, to ownership and assets. Defining small firms using these criteria – which did not extend across the whole economy – was seen to be unnecessarily complex, and it did not allow for comparisons to be made easily.

In addition to the complex and somewhat confusing definitions proposed by the Bolton Committee, small businesses are also defined in law, under the Companies Act (1985) and also by the European Commission with the aim of harmonising definitions across the EU (Brooksbank 2000). The more commonly-used definition however is that used by the Department of Trade and Industry, which is as follows:

- *Micro-enterprises* Firms with between 0 and 9 employees;
- *Small Enterprises* Firms with between 0 and 49 employee;
- *Medium Enterprises* Firms with between 50 and 249 employees;
- *Large Enterprises* Firms with over 250 employees

It should be acknowledged, however, that such an all-embracing definition brings its own problems, as pointed out by Curran, Blackburn & Woods (1992). This paper reports an interesting attempt to get to grips with the idea that 'smallness' (as in 'small' firms) is a multi-dimensional concept, and that simple one-dimension definitions cannot adequately capture all these different aspects of what 'small-ness' means. In this way, they have attempted to develop a 'grounded' definition of what a 'small business' is, as understood by those that own and operate them – owner-managers, industry representatives, trade associations and others. The details of the consensual definitions that emerged are reported in Curran *et. al.* (1992), and are not of direct consequence to this research. The important point to take from this attempt to produce a socially grounded definition of small businesses is that such concepts cannot easily be captured and expressed in straightforward, reductionist terms, echoing the contested terms explored in the previous chapter.

Perhaps the question of definition is unimportant. Bannock and Peacock (1989) in *Governments and Small Business* reflect on the experiences of a Section of the Economic and Social Committee (within the EC), which, having failed initially to define exactly what an SME is, still managed to produce a 17-page paper on the subject of SMEs. The consensus was that although they were unable to agree on a working definition of SMEs, this did not greatly hinder their progress because, as the Director pointed out "we all clearly know what we are talking about". In other words, a rigorous definition is not necessarily needed, because those involved with small firms can recognise them.

4.4 SMEs and Employment Provision

The issue of small firms and their relative importance as providers of jobs in the UK is very complex. The whole subject area is complicated by the widely acknowledged fact that enterprise data relating to small firms in the UK is sadly deficient (Storey 1994, Bannock & Peacock 1989). There appears to be no comprehensive database that lists the details of all businesses in the UK. Although business databases do exist, some of them are limited to certain sectors, such as the Census of Agriculture, while others, such as the VAT Register, do not provide comprehensive coverage, due in part to the voluntary nature of self-notification by businesses. The latter of these is a particularly frustrating source of data for researchers keen to examine the role of small firms in job creation in the UK. Data on employment numbers is not routinely collected as part of the VAT procedures. Thus, it is very difficult to estimate how many small firms there are in the UK, never mind how many jobs they provide. Storey notes that, "statistics on numbers of UK enterprises and their distribution by employment size do reflect a substantial element of 'judgement' exercised by the statisticians." (1994: 20). For 'judgement' one should perhaps read 'educated guess'.

Yet, despite the deficiencies in the data, the general pattern of the on-going fortunes of SMEs can perhaps be described with some confidence. During the post-WWII years (the 'Fordist' era), large firms employing many thousands of workers were very much the favoured model for successful regional development, particularly in the manufacturing and production sectors. Large firms dominated the UK economy throughout the post-war years, right up until the 1960's. In fact, the dominance of these large firms produced a concern for the fate of the small business in Britain. The aforementioned Bolton Committee of Inquiry on Small Firms was set up, in 1969, to investigate an apparently terminal decline in the number of small firms in the UK. With the benefit of hindsight, it is

apparent now that even as the Bolton Report (HM Government 1971) was being written, the situation regarding small firms was changing. Murray (1989) writes of the declining fortunes of the Fordist industries and their adjustment to a changing market, but as Curran & Blackburn note, the underlying reasons for the shift towards a dominance of small-scale capital in the UK are still debated (1991).

The relationship between small business and employment provision may also have changed with time. The perceived wisdom of the 1960s held that large firms created proportionally more jobs than smaller firms did, thus attempts to reduce unemployment via the business sector were focused on encouraging job creation by larger firms. In 1979 David Birch, an American researcher, published work which suggested that small firms (those with less than 100 employees) created over 80% of the net new jobs in the US during the early 1970s (1979). At the time, his findings were dismissed because they ran contrary to perceived wisdom, and more recently the data on which his research was based has been questioned (Davis, Haltiwanger & Schuh 1993) and re-defended (Gallagher 1995). Yet, despite the on-going debates, small firms have come to be a major focus for economic policy makers. Certainly, entrepreneurship is acknowledged to be an essential component of job creation strategies (Arzeni 1997) and most new enterprises are, by their very nature, small to begin with. Small businesses are widely accepted as a fundamental component of any strategy to develop employment opportunities (Stanworth & Gray 1991).

Daly & McCann (1992) and McCann (1993), both cited in Storey (1994, provide some data supporting the key position of SMEs in the UK economy. They estimate that in 1991 micro-enterprises provided 28% of all jobs in the UK. Furthermore, the SME group as a whole provided 50% of jobs in the UK in the same year. Brooksbanks (2000) reports that findings of the Statistical Bulletin *Small and Medium Enterprise Statistics for the UK, 1997*. His examination of the statistics is revealing: small businesses (as defined by the DTI above) account for no less than 99% of all businesses, and 45% of non-government employment – compared with 43% provided by the 7,000 largest firms in the UK. Despite the lack of quality data regarding employment in small firms, the general consensus in the literature appears to be that small businesses dominate the stock of businesses in the UK, and they provide a sizeable proportion of the jobs. Thus we can conclude that SMEs have an important role to play in the UK economy, both in terms of turnover and employment provision.

4.5 The Entrepreneur: Concepts, Personality and Environment

Having established the importance of the small firm to the wider economy of the UK, we can turn now to examine the entrepreneurs themselves, to identify who they are and what they do. In the entrepreneurial literature, there appear to be two main strands of research, each attempting to understand the actions of entrepreneurs and the underlying motivations and explanations for such behaviour. These can be described, respectively, as the 'personality approach' and the 'environmental approach'. The former of these is predicated on a belief that 'entrepreneurs' as a group as somehow 'different' from the rest of society, that they have some inherent skill or characteristic that marks them out from others. Such approaches attempt to identify and explain these defining characteristics. The second approach holds that the environment in which the entrepreneur finds himself has more influence on his entrepreneurial actions than any 'innate' quality. The 'entrepreneurial environment' is understood in its widest sense to include all the physical, social and economic conditions in which an entrepreneur operates. Morrison, Rimmington & Williams (1999) refer to political intervention, social structure and government policies as examples of environmental influences on entrepreneurs. This latter approach has particular resonance with this current study, so will be examined in some detail.

4.5.1 Concepts: Identifying the Entrepreneurial Personality

Many texts provide a comprehensive account of personality trait theory in entrepreneurial research including Chell, Haworth & Brearley (1991) and Casson (1982, 1990). The aim here is to provide a brief overview of some of the main concepts and theories that attempt to explain the phenomenon that is enterprise. Firstly, the major concepts will be reviewed, to set the scene for the particular research that will be highly relevant to this current study. Secondly, the two important ontological approaches to exploring entrepreneurship outlined above will be examined.

The important point to make at the outset is that while there are many individual theories of 'how to do' entrepreneurship, there are little or no formal philosophies to underpin the subject. The substantive theory of enterprise is considerable: testament to this is the proliferation of courses that represent variations on a theme of 'Enterprise Studies' in the UK. It appears that we can tell people how it is done, and even show them how they can do it – but the subject still lacks "a substantial theoretical foundation" (Bygrave & Hofer 1991).

Numerous attempts have been made to identify what exactly 'makes' a successful entrepreneur. In *The Entrepreneurial Personality: Concepts, Cases and Categories* Elizabeth Chell and her colleagues (Chell, Haworth & Brearley 1991) review and discuss the subject of entrepreneurial personality traits. Since McLelland's initial hypothesis (1961) – that entrepreneurs are 'special people' by virtue of a specific character trait – personality trait theory has been used by numerous researchers in their attempts to identify the distinct characteristics of entrepreneurs. McLelland's original idea was attractive in its simplicity: he hypothesized that 'n-Ach', or, 'need to achieve', was the defining characteristic of the entrepreneur. Since McLelland, many researchers have further developed the trait theory approach, the aim being to identify the particular characteristic, or set of characteristics, that distinguish entrepreneurs from non-entrepreneurs. Timmons and his colleagues (Timmons, Smollen & Dingee 1985; Timmons 1989), for example, provide some detailed examples of this latter approach and the authors make a particularly comprehensive attempt to understand entrepreneurship from the perspective of the individual, explaining the phenomenon of enterprise in terms of entrepreneurial personality as a collection of particular character traits. Bridge *et. al.* (1998) list seven different 'traits' which have been identified by various authors as follows:

- Achievement Motivation, also known as N-Ach (McLelland 1961, 1965)
- Risk-taking Propensity (Drucker 1985)
- Locus of Control (Rotter 1966, Anderson 1977)
- Need for Autonomy
- Determination
- Initiative
- Creativity
- Self-confidence and Trust.

This approach has been subjected to increasing levels of criticism, arising from the ongoing debate between personality theorists and social psychologists concerning the nature of human behaviour. Personality trait theory has been strongly criticised for making the assumption that certain identifiable personality traits result in consistent behavioural patterns, across a range of different situations (Mischel 1973). McLelland's theory and that of personality trait theory in general, can be critiqued on several points. Firstly, can we rigorously prove that 'traits', as inherent personal characteristics, exist? Where McLelland originally identified a single trait, Meredith identifies no less than 19 (1982) – where does the identification of individual traits such as those above end? When does a single trait become a mass of characteristics, too complex to be individually identified? Secondly, it is extremely difficult to demonstrate in practice that certain 'traits' lead to specific

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Political & Economic Influences on Entrepreneurs

The *economic* and *political* environment most probably influences business birth rates, through the level of support that is made available to entrepreneurs and also through the prevailing economic climate of a region. Casson (1982) for example, provides a possible explanation for differential regional rates of entrepreneurial activity, by highlighting the varying economic situation in different regions. When research showed that Scotland lagged behind the Midlands, in terms of business start-up, which in turn lagged behind the south-east of England, an explanation could be advanced which related to the different economic environment in each region. Specifically, this related to a traditional dependence on large employers, and a low rate of home ownership, which limits potential equity for business start-up capital. There is a wide recognition that lack of finance has a major impact on those individuals who might otherwise opt to start a business, thus government intervention to provide start-up capital can have a positive influence on business births. Any political or economic environment that encourages enterprise will make available opportunities to obtain start-up finance and business information – through government schemes, for example. Deakins (1996) lists the Enterprise Allowance Scheme, the Small Firms Loans Guarantee Scheme, the Business Expansion Scheme and others. Such schemes are generally distributed around the country through the Enterprise Network, a group of semi-autonomous institutions that provide access to information and financial assistance to prospective entrepreneurs.

Historically, the varying fortunes of the small business sector can be examined in relation to the prevailing political attitude towards them. Prior to the Conservative Government of 1979, economic progress was believed to lie with large, technologically-oriented corporations, operating within a nationally regulated economy. As recession led to rising unemployment and widespread social discontent, the ideal of personal enterprise was hailed as a 'cure-all' for these problems. The incoming Conservative government was a vigorous promoter of this ideal – not least because it could result in the shifting of responsibility for social and economic welfare from national government to the individual. Beesley & Wilson (1984) provide a detailed, if somewhat dated, account of this period in history, including the work of the Bolton Committee. As noted previously, the Bolton Committee was set up to investigate and hopefully reverse the fortunes of the small business sector, which until the late 1970's demonstrated a steady decline. Throughout the 1980's and early 1990's, under the tutelage of the Thatcher government, small business once again grew

in number. Goss (1991) notes that no less than 108 different initiatives were put into place between 1979 and 1983 to create a positive 'environment for enterprise', compared to none in the 1960's. Burrows (1991), however, questions whether the Conservative government, and indeed the current Labour government, can take sole credit for the rejuvenation of the small business sector, and decides that they cannot. He suggests instead that it has been the result of many converging factors, including socio-cultural changes (some of which are discussed below), various economic patterns of change, and ideological factors.

Social and Cultural Influences

The social environment in which an entrepreneur is located also appears to be highly influential. Social attitudes towards enterprise and entrepreneurs are a good example of this. As Bannock and Peacock state, "It used to be a very unfashionable thing in Britain to start up one's own business, a route taken predominantly by the untrained and uneducated. Now it is all the rage. Large numbers of graduates of bodies of higher education now express a desire to have their own firm and many start one straight away" (1989: 85). Indeed, the authors conclude that the spirit of enterprise has been 'reborn' in Britain. In England at least, the economic policies of the Thatcher government "were presented as a painful but necessary 'cure', leading to the quasi-spiritual re-birth of enterprise" (Morrison *et.al.* 1999: 79). However, research carried out in Scotland has suggested that the 'spirit of enterprise' is being constrained by highly negative social attitudes. In 1993, the newly formed Scottish Enterprise Network published a set of strategic initiatives entitled the *Business Birth Rate Strategy* (BBRS) which aimed to "recognise a key economic issue: the creation of new and growing businesses" (Scottish Enterprise 1993b: 1). Research carried out by Scottish Enterprise at the time suggested that social and cultural attitudes in Scotland – negative attitudes towards risk and failure, for example – were actually constraining the ability of Scottish entrepreneurs to start up new businesses successfully. What is more, these negative perceptions were not limited to the 'man on the street'. They were found to exist in schools, colleges and universities, in financial institutions and policy-making bodies (Scottish Enterprise 1993a). A good example of negative attitudes towards entrepreneurs as a group is provided by Jedrej and Nuttal, in their study of the impact of rural re-population in Scotland. They list some of the highly negative terms used by the media to describe urban incomers to rural areas, which include "'hippies' and 'drop puts', 'the '87 Crash refugees', 'burnt out yuppies' and 'entrepreneurs'" (1996: 53). This demonstrates the negative associations that people may make with the word 'entrepreneur'. It also

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communities. This highlights quite clearly the anthropocentric approach towards sustainable development that is being adopted. Improving the 'quality of life' for people living in rural areas is one of the most important guiding principles of the Executive's development planning. In various policy documents, the Scottish Executive have made clear that sustainable development is concerned with people and the quality of their lives in economic, social and environmental terms.

It is also apparent that employment opportunities, or the lack of them, are intricately linked with quality-of-rural-life issues. Many so-called 'rural problems' can be traced back to a perceived lack of suitable employment opportunities. Most obviously, the departure of young people from rural communities has been linked to a lack of job opportunities, leading to an ageing population structure and attendant social problems. Often, the most educationally able young people leave their homes to undertake further study in towns or cities. Because there are relatively few employment opportunities in small rural communities for such highly qualified individuals, few return to their home villages.

The quality of jobs that are available in rural areas is also of importance. Increasingly, the 'jobs pool' is dominated by part-time, seasonal, low-paid jobs in the service industries, most obviously tourism. Although the tourist industry is now the largest in the world, and certainly supports many remote rural areas, the jobs it provides are not always of the highest quality in terms of stability, security, or working conditions. Many rural people would not feel in a position to be fussy however – 'there's a job here for anyone that wants to work' is a judgement often heard in remote rural communities, implying that anyone who doesn't work is either lazy or too choosy. Yet job quality is an issue, particularly when considering the long-term viability of employment provision.

As traditional rural industries have declined, and the service sector has expanded across the nation, employment patterns in urban and rural areas are in fact more similar than ever before. New ways of working, technological advances and the phenomenon of counter-urbanisation have all contributed to this change. We shall examine the issue of rural employment in Scotland by firstly examine the continuing decline in traditional rural industries. Secondly, the expansion of the service, and other non-traditional rural industries will be discussed. Several recent publications provide more detailed analyses of changing patterns of rural employment. A committee of the Scottish Parliament recently produced an in-depth report on the subject (Rural Development

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Committee 2001) Other useful references include Bryden & Bollman (2001) who review rural employment in the range of OECD countries, and Ward & Lowe (1998) who focus on the 'lived experiences' of rural people in respect of the on-going re-structuring of rural society.

4.6.2 Declining Employment in Traditional Rural Industries

One identifiable trend is the declining position of agriculture, and other primary industries, as rural employers. The traditional rural activities that have shaped life in the countryside for many years are under increasing pressure from both internal and external influences and are increasingly difficult to run profitably – as the sever decrease in the number of family farms demonstrates. Highlands and Islands Enterprise (HIE) statistics show that between the years 1993 and 1995 – a very small snapshot – employment in Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing in the Highlands and Islands area fell by no less than 26% (HIE 1995). Post & Tuerlin (1997) report that employment in agriculture in EU countries has declined at around 2-3% per annum for at least the last decade.

Since the end of World War II, and the subsequent drive to make Europe (and the UK) more self-sufficient in terms of primary production, there has been a constant push from European and national governments to encourage farmers to maximise production at any cost. The relative successes and failures of the CAP aside, the result has been an increasing intensification of farming methods and land use. With time, the subsidy-assisted intensification and mechanisation of farming operations has meant that increasingly fewer people are required to work on the land. At the same time, the marginal returns to the farmer or landowner have decreased, thus reducing his ability to pay for additional labour. When Howard Newby was writing his account of social change in Rural England in 1979, the number of farm labourers working on the land was decreasing at an approximate rate of 20,000 each year (1979). The majority of these losses have been full-time jobs, some of which have been replaced by part-time or casual labour. The era that Newby discusses represents one of the most severe periods of rural depopulation – that of the late 1940s until the 1970s. In Scotland, at least, it is reported that the long-term decline in agricultural employment appears to have levelled off in the early 1990s (Lawson & Ritchie 2000). Despite this, economic pressure on the UK agricultural sector has continued to intensify in several ways: 'globalisation' of food production and increasing competition in the world food market, a strong sterling currency which makes the export of produce less profitable, and recently, a series of farming 'crises' such as BSE, the debate over genetically modified foods, and most recently the Foot and Mouth outbreak

(February 2001). Add to this potent brew proposed restructuring of the Common Agricultural Policy, with associated reductions in subsidies, changes in the structure and membership of the European Community, and increasing pressure from the environmental and conservation lobbies, and the life of a farmer in the 'rural idyll' quickly becomes more of a nightmare. Norberg-Hodge, Merrifield & Gorelick (2000), discussing the 'farming crisis' in the UK, point out that the industry's own statistics show that the average real UK farm income has dropped by as much as 75% since 1998, and that more than 20,000 farmers have left the industry in the same period. Thus, the decline in agricultural employment, which first affected farm labourers is increasingly apparent among farmers themselves, especially family and small-scale operators. Another important point made by these authors is that problems in the agricultural industry do not stop at the farm gate, so to speak: in 1999, some 90% of rural industries in the UK laid off staff, not just farming operations. Thus, economic decline in the farming industry has an impact on the whole economy of rural areas – village shops and other local services, haulage firms, seed suppliers, machinery sales, as well as processing services such as meat slaughterers and dairy processors (Bryden 2002) suffer as well.

This brief account demonstrates how both internal and external forces have combined to the detriment of traditional rural industries. Similar stories could be told of the forestry, fishing and aggregate industries. It has been suggested that these changes can be associated with a wider, global process, and that the very basis of production is changing: primary production is perhaps no longer the concern of the 'developed' Western world. New forms of production and consumption are emerging, which may be having a major influence on rural economies the world over. The detail of this shift will be discussed, further on in this review, as they are of importance to this research. At this point, however, it is appropriate to consider some of the 'new' rural industries – those that are developing and emerging as sources of employment in rural areas.

4.6.3 'New' Rural Employers: private enterprises & public services

Bryden & Bollman (2000) highlighted the fact that, in many places, the decline in agriculture has been counterbalanced, to a varying extent, by increasing employment opportunities in the secondary and tertiary sectors. The dynamics of the movement of people and jobs from primary to secondary and tertiary employment are very complex, and are currently being explored by researchers connected with the DORA (Dynamics of Rural Areas) Project, a long-running research

project which, in Scotland, focuses on changing economic, social and employment patterns in rural Scotland (Atterton, et. al. 2001).

The secondary and tertiary sectors in the UK are dominated by tourism and other service industries, such as transport and distribution. Lawson and Ritchie (2000) highlight the growing importance of the services sector in Scottish rural employment: in 1997, with 66.8% of the population of rural Scotland employed in the services sector, as opposed to 11.8% in the primary industries. Indeed, the Rural Development Committee of the Scottish Executive points out that, "the main growth in employment in rural Scotland has been in the services sector, which now accounts for 2 out of 3 jobs in rural Scotland" (2001: 4). The 'Service' sector is a very broad one, and it includes both new and innovative industries (ICT and business services) as well as some which are seen as more traditional, at least in the context of rural employment (tourism and public services). Tourism has become the mainstay of many rural communities, and it is doubtful whether many would survive without the seasonal influx of hill walkers and bird watchers, Munro-baggers and culture seekers. It may seem inappropriate to describe Scottish rural tourism as a 'new' industry, as it has been growing in stature ever since Samuel Johnson published his *Journey to the Western Islands of Scotland* in 1775, and was further boosted by Walter Scott's energetic promotion of the 'Highland Myth' through works including *Waverly* and *Rob Roy.* Yet there is no doubting that rural tourism in its many forms has provided an alternative living for many people who might previously have been employed in agricultural activities, and in this sense it is 'new': it now dominates the economy of rural Scotland, and the primary industries are no competition in terms of employment provision.

There are other sectors of the service industry that have developed in rural areas, in unprecedented ways. The Highlands and Islands Development Board (HIDB) and its later incarnation HIE have invested heavily in the provision of advanced telecommunications facilities in remote rural areas, and these seem to have had some measure of success (Sproull, Bryden & Black 1997). Riding on the back of technological advances, business growth and associated employment in the Information and Communication Technology (ICT) and business services sector has expanded in recent years. HIE statistics show that in the period 1993-1995, the number of people employed by the Business Services sector in the H&I area rose by 18.5%. Thus, in remote rural areas, new ICT communications technology is seen as one way to "locate high quality jobs in

remote communities in both service and manufacturing sectors" (HIE 1999: 3). Perth and Kinross, which qualifies as 'less remote rural' under Scottish Office 'remoteness' criteria, provides a good snapshot of this new sector. The 'Business Births' column in the Perth & Kinross Business Newsletter (Issue 6, November 2000) lists new businesses that have been started in the region during that month. Of the thirteen new Perthshire businesses listed in the column, 5 are involved in the provision of ICT services, or specifically use the Net to market and sell their products. Examples range from 'CompletelyScottish.com – web-based retailing of quality Scottish products' to 'MG Technologies – provider of a bespoke IT service to small companies'. The development of ICT has allowed potential business owners in remote rural areas to overcome, to some extent, the 'geographical disadvantage' of being located far from the main (urban) centres of production and consumption.

The second sector mentioned in the title, is perhaps not entirely appropriate for inclusion as a 'new' rural employer. The public services sector has long been seen as an important provider of employment opportunities for skilled workers in rural areas. Local authorities are required to provide a certain level of services to the communities they serve, irrespective of the actual level of population in the region. As the DORA findings demonstrate, public sector employment (education, health, public administration, social security, law and order) is still an important factor in rural employment (Atterton et.al. 2001, Bryden 2002). Lawson & Ritchie point out, "the public sector is often perceived by those residing in rural areas to be of more importance to their local economy than for the country as a whole" (2000: 3). Despite the fact that the relative proportions of people employed in the public sector in rural Scotland and the country as a whole are very similar (26% and 27% in 1997 respectively), this sector is perceived as being a relatively more important source of employment in rural areas. (Personal communication with various local authority workers in remote rural areas supports this: jobs with 'the cooncil' are perceived as being better paid, and far more secure than employment in the farming, fishing or tourist industries.)

On a more general level, the picture of rural employment – although changing – is not altogether bleak. Keeble and Tyler (1995) report that in the UK, the fastest growth in employment is in fact occurring in rural areas. A previous study by Keeble, Tyler, Broom & Lewis (1992) also displays rural areas in a positive light, in respect of their propensity to generate higher rates of business start-up. In the private sector, small businesses are the primary employment providers in rural

areas, from self-employed 'one-man-bands', to larger manufacturing and retail businesses. The DORA project has noted that people previously employed in agriculture have to work some where: for many of them turn to various forms of self-employment, to personal enterprise and to the development of small businesses – often non-agricultural in nature (Atterton *et. al.* 2001). Enterprise has become an important factor in the relative success of some rural areas. As Bryden has it "people are doing it for themselves" (2002:13), turning to small-scale local entrepreneurship, creating businesses within the 'new economy'. The section below takes a broad look at rural enterprise and small business, and examines in more detail the 'new economy' of rural areas, linking this with the overall post-modern context of this study.

4.6.4 Rural Businesses – Providing a Living and Filling the Gaps

On one hand, it would appear that entrepreneurs who choose to set up a business in a remote rural area are making a rather unwise choice. People often talk about the 'rural disadvantage' or the need to 'overcome the geographic disadvantage'. Anderson argues that, "society has polarised into cities and a periphery... [the latter of which] can be characterised as being rural" (2000: 92). For the potential small businessman, the realities of operating a business in a 'peripheral' rural area must be considered. Keeble *et. al.* (1992) report that rural business managers perceive many disadvantages in their location: distance to customers and suppliers, shortages of managerial and skilled labour, poorer access to business services and training facilities were all mentioned by respondents. Furthermore, in many rural locations, the infrastructure needed to support the successful operation of a business may not exist, and there is the risk of remote areas being completely cut off during the winter months. Low levels of local population mean that businesses will have to compete for a very small local market, and are likely to be dependent on attracting customers from outside the area. Return on capital is often poor among rural businesses, especially in the local service sector. In many rural areas, the majority of able young people head for the bright lights of the university towns, and frequently do not return, further depriving the area of a valuable skills base.

Taking all these factors into account, it seems unlikely that anyone would opt to set up a business in a remote rural area. Yet people do – and in increasingly large numbers, as shown by the statistics gathered by the BBRS previously (Scottish Enterprise 1993a). The statistics showed that the business birth rate in rural Scotland was actually above the national average. Indeed, the draft

copy of the 2000 review of the original BBRS for Scotland includes a section entitled "Lessons from Rural Scotland". This acknowledges that the rate of business start-up appears to be relatively higher in rural Scotland, and suggested that if the reasons for this could be divined, perhaps such lessons learned could be applied elsewhere in the country (Scottish Enterprise 2000b). It must be remembered however, that simple statistics do not tell the whole story. Rural areas may exhibit a higher business birth rate than some urban areas but issues such as growth potential, and the ability of such businesses to actually provide employment, and survive, must be borne in mind.

Small businesses have always existed in rural areas – indeed they may be considered as the mainstay of the rural economy, particularly if the family farm is included in the definition of a small business. In a way, the very 'rural' nature of the areas is likely to be the reason for the predominance of self-employment and business start-up. The lack of employers in rural areas has meant that people living in such areas have always had to create employment for themselves (and others) by becoming self-employed. Jedrej & Nuttall found that many older rural residents referred to their communities as being 'self-sufficient' in the past. This self-sufficiency has resulted in part from the lack of available public services and facilities in rural areas, many of which are provided centrally in more populated areas. This situation continues today as local authorities become increasingly cost-aware and centralised in their operations. "Too often, bus services are reduced, post offices are closed, and employment opportunities restricted. There is a lack of some foodstuffs, and even in agriculturally productive areas this can extend to bread, basic groceries, and fresh vegetables. There is also a lack of amenities and paucity of advice from local authorities. Shops can be distant, and it may be a two-mile walk to a telephone box" (1996: 68). These 'lacks' have, in the past, forced rural communities to become self-sufficient. In addition, both now and in the past, they provide gaps in the market into which rural entrepreneurs can fit. A good example is a local transport company, which develops and flourishes when larger companies withdraw bus services from remote areas, and expands out into hiring out cars and minivans to visitors, and taxicab hire. Such companies are small in absolute terms, but they can flourish where a larger, more profit- and cost-conscious company could not or would not bother. So, from the perspective of the small business owner, the disadvantages inherent in running a business in a rural area are the very factors that give their business a competitive advantage – the lack of competition and the need for local provision of services taken for granted elsewhere. The respondents in the current

study frequently pointed out that 'no one ever started a business out here to get rich': why then do people increasingly opt for the uncertain life of a rural entrepreneur?

4.6.5 In-migration: New Life and New Jobs for Rural Areas

Migration flows from urban areas to the countryside (counter-urbanisation) have been observed for some time. In essence, 'quality of life' reasons are attracting people to live in rural and remote areas. This can be seen as part of a wider shift in urban – rural values, where the lifestyle opportunities on offer in rural areas are increasingly valued (Jones, Caird & Ford 1984, Jones et. al. 1984, Hegarty 1995). This phenomenon has two important consequences for rural employment.

Firstly, rural in-migrants tend to be highly educated individuals (Findlay *et al.* 1999), and they often have a certain amount of capital at their disposal – perhaps from the sale of a property in an urban area. This ties in with the findings of Keeble, Tyler, Broom & Lewis' major study, *Business Success in the Countryside* (1992). The advantages of a rural location as perceived by rural managers included "an attractive living and working environment for manager and staff", as well as the more prosaic advantages of lower overheads and lower labour costs. Bryden (2002) suggests that the relocation of economically active people to remote rural areas beyond the commuting zone is dependent not only on quality-of-life factors, and the attraction of the rural idyll, but on the opportunities for employment and / or enterprise. Thus, the first consequence of counter-urbanisation is a supply of economically active, well-qualified individuals who are moving for both tangible (employment or enterprise) and intangible (quality-of-life) reasons. Despite the conflicts that can arise from the inevitable social change in rural communities that results, it cannot be denied that in-comers are bringing new economic life to many communities in rural Scotland. Findlay *et al.* (1999) in a study for the Scottish Office, note that in addition to creating more employment opportunities and economic activity by simply living (and spending money) in remote rural areas, many self-employed in-migrants create "significant job opportunities" within the rural community because many of them have the ability, the means and the desire to create successful enterprises which in turn go on to provide employment opportunities as they grow. Keeble *et al.* describe this phenomenon as "environmentally-influenced population migration to... rural areas and high rates of new enterprise formation there" (1992: xi – see also Keeble 1993, 1997).

Keeble *et al.* also give some clues as to the second important factor that links to changing rural values (or perhaps changing urban values relating to rurality, as the majority of in-migrants come from urban areas). In addition to the 'rural advantages' noted above which are essentially lifestyle reasons, they also mention, as secondary advantages, "access to particular local markets, notably tourism or agriculture...or the product's need for a rural 'image' for marketing purposes" (1992: 37). In this, Keeble echoes the phrase used by Adaylot (1984) previously: in a later paper he refers directly to the "rural milieu", and its influence on enterprise creation in rural areas (1997). The findings of the work of Keeble and his colleagues (1992) can be summarised thus:

- Rural business founders are much more likely to be in-migrants to a particular location than founders of urban businesses;
- Employment has grown faster in recent years in rural small firms than in urban firms;
- Rural firms tend to be somewhat younger than urban firms, suggesting that the birth rate of firms in rural areas is higher than that in urban areas;
- Rural firms increasingly tend to occupy and successfully exploit specific market niches that differ considerably from those of urban firms;
- Rural firms appear to be more innovative than urban firms, particularly those in more accessible rural locations;
- Overall, firms located in rural areas seem to be more satisfied with their location than those in urban areas.

(From Curran & Storey 1993: 6)

The *Business Success in the Countryside* study can be criticised for its exclusion of many typically rural businesses, such as the tourism and agricultural sectors, and it may well be that their definition of 'remote' or 'accessible' rural areas is somewhat different to that applied in, for example, northern Scotland. However, it provides a useful and informative source of information about rural enterprise, not least because it reveals the importance of the 'rural milieu' to rural entrepreneurs, and the advantages implicit therein, despite the more obvious disadvantages of geography and distance.

Keeble *et.al* (1992) note the existence of 'niche markets' that rural firms have access to by virtue of their location. According to Bryden (2002) these niche markets do indeed exist: they are part of an emerging 'economy' in rural areas, which provides new markets and marketing styles, suggests new products and services. These 'advantages' are what Bryden & Munro (2000) refer to as the 'new economy' of rural areas. The new economy includes "sectors linked with new 'consumption demands' including tourism and recreation activities and related services, with the new service type activities linked to ICT and new value-added activities linked to niche markets" (Bryden 2002: 10).

Essentially, this 'new rural economy' provides opportunities for innovative entrepreneurs to establish and grow enterprises based on the sources on value that are inherent in the 'new consumption demands' that are being placed upon remote rural areas. The remainder of this chapter will focus on these new 'consumption demands' and tie this into the final section on 'environmental entrepreneurship'.

4.7 Environmental Enterprise

One of the main themes of this literature review has been the issue of environmental values. Specifically, we have focused on describing these values, and examining where their roots may lie. Moving on, we have shown how high quality 'natural' environments can be seen as a source of value, in and of themselves. As such, they can be seen as something that has the potential to be exploited as a resource. The action of recognising and commodifying environmental values has become known broadly as 'environmental enterprise'. Yet, this phrase can have several meanings, two of which are explored below.

4.7.1 Environmental Enterprise: Meanings and Actions

One popular meaning for the phrase 'environmental enterprise' has emerged with the development of 'green technology', itself a response by industry to the environmental concerns of the public. Many multi-national companies – perhaps with an eye to the concerns of their shareholders and customers – have pledged varying degrees of 'environmentally friendly' behaviour. Shell, for example, now include a section in their Annual Report entitled "Shell action on the environment", which details various projects the company has been involved in. In 1999 these ranged from investment in the development of renewable energy technology, to various 'cleaner operations' developments – a reduction of greenhouse gas production, a reduction in the emissions of certain harmful substances and a reduced amount of 'venting' and 'flaring' from Shell plants (Shell UK 1999) While some authors may dismiss such developments as "technicist kitsch" (Newton & Harte 1997: 1) and essentially a sop to the 'evangelism' of the environmentalist movement, many major industrial players appear, at least on the surface, to be taking some actions to respond to public demands that they 'clean up their act'. Thus, the development of 'green technology' through industrial research and development has been a major growth area in recent years, as newer and more stringent environmental protection laws have been passed in response to these public (and political) concerns. Outside the industrial sector, 'environmental entrepreneurs' have emerged in

other areas, such as the architecture and building services sector – the development of 'ecologically friendly houses' which maximise energy efficiency and minimise wastage through certain design features have attracted much attention. Similarly, the renewable energy sector is of increasing importance, emerging in response to concerns about global warming and pollution. All the research and design activities that occur in these expanding fields are loosely connected by their shared aim to develop industrial systems, processes and products that are more environmentally-benign than those currently in use. 'Environmental enterprise' in this context refers to 'entrepreneurial activity that benefits the environment through the development of 'green' technology and production systems'.

The second meaning of the phrase – and the one with which we are concerned in this current study – is less easy to define. Rather than 'enterprising behaviour that benefits the environment' it is 'The Environment' itself which becomes the product to be bought and sold. More accurately perhaps, 're-presentations' of the Environment are being sold. Environmental entrepreneurs operating in this marketplace are essentially selling forms of environmental 'values'. As we shall see, the form in which these 'products' are sold varies widely: experiences, aesthetic and physical pleasure, signs and symbols of 'The Environment' are what the consumer is buying. And the seller is the 'environmental entrepreneur', the person who has recognised the potential source of value, commodified it and sold 'The Environment' to the consumer.

The commodification of the environment was discussed previously in some detail, with particular reference to its association with contemporary environmental values, and the increasing popularity of environmentalism. It was demonstrated that, in today's society, an association with the 'environment' or 'nature' is considered to be of positive value, irrespective of the 'reality' of such an association. This was described by Goodin (1992) as the theory of 'green value': environmentalism, and an association with it, has become 'socially desirable' (Benton 1995). Thus a new source of value has emerged from changing societal mores. Having recognised this source of value, a successful entrepreneur can create an opportunity to extract profit from its commodification, and environmental enterprise can be defined thus as 'entrepreneurial activity that commodifies and markets intangible environmental values'.

Despite the distinction that has been made, it is possible to see where the common roots of these different forms of environmental entrepreneurialism lie. Both are rooted in the popularisation of environmental values, and the increase in public awareness of the environmental consequences of current human ways of living. This is one effect of the growth in environmentalism: ordinary people are increasingly aware of the environmental impacts of 'big business' on the planet, and the implications for human health. Consumers are increasingly demanding cleaner technologies and more environmentally benign forms of production (though, paradoxically, their purchasing choices may not always reflect this 'green' ideology: Roberts 1995). The other form of 'environmental entrepreneurialism' also stems from the growth in environmentalism – but in a much more subtle way. As noted previously, being 'seen to be green' has become valuable in itself. Thus, in recognising this 'green value' and providing opportunities for consumers to 'purchase' some representation of this value, the entrepreneur is 'selling the environment'.

At the conceptual level, the 'environmental entrepreneur', in this case, may not be doing anything different from other entrepreneurs, in that he (or she) is capable of recognising, commodifying and selling a product on the market. What makes 'environmental entrepreneurs' special (at least in the context of this research) is their ability to recognise the value of something as intangible and ephemeral as 'nature' or 'the natural' or 'the natural environment', and turn it into a product which can be sold.

4.7.2 Rural Entrepreneurs & Environmental Entrepreneurs in the Countryside

Having established what we mean by 'environmental entrepreneurs' in the context of this study, it is important to make clear the overlap, or the similarities, between 'environmental entrepreneurs' and 'rural entrepreneurs'. Rural values and environmental values are very closely related: people associate the 'countryside' with 'the environment' as the 'natural environment' (Barry 1999), as discussed at the beginning of the literature review. The 'rural environment' and the 'urban environment' may well be equally valid representations of local environments. However, when people talk about 'the environment' in relation to 'nature' and 'natural environments', these will be much more closely associated with 'rurality' than with 'urbanity'. The rural has been described previously as being a 'reservoir of the natural'. Thus, rural areas are prime venues or 'sales points' from the point of view of anyone seeking to 'sell' the environment.

Examples were given in Chapter 3 of how the landscape and 'natural environment' have been commodified and 'sold' to consumers, in the form of a 'Wilderness Experience'. It was also pointed out that although the 'wilderness ideal' originally developed as an almost uniquely American phenomenon, it is now 'sold' throughout the world. Thus, despite the attempts of authors such as James Hunter (1995) to deconstruct and expose the inaccuracies of our perception of the Highland and Islands as 'the last wilderness in Europe', and to highlight the 'reality' of a once inhabited, thriving and heavily populated crofting landscape, society persists in valuing these places for their emptiness and desolation – and believing these to be their 'natural' state. Such values ('peace and quiet', 'isolation') are also closely linked with the reasons why people, especially urban dwellers, value rural areas. Again, this has been discussed previously, in our review of social constructions of 'rurality'. However, the aim here is to consider 'rurality' in the context of 'rural entrepreneurs', specifically 'entrepreneurs of the rural environment'. As above, different interpretations are possible. For example, are 'rural entrepreneurs' so defined simply by virtue of their being located in a rural area? Perhaps this is the case, and this question will be explored further. Another alternative is to consider 'rural entrepreneurs' in the same light as the aforementioned 'environmental entrepreneurs': that they are so-called because they are concerned with the commodification of certain key sources of value, in this case 'the rural environment' as a source of value.

One of the points made previously was that the countryside is no longer simply the space in which food production takes place – if it ever was. Newby (1979) details the rise of the concept of 'landscape' as a 'visual phenomenon' in rural England in the 17th and 18th centuries, and makes it quite clear how such values persist in contemporary (urban) society. With the advent of environmentalism and a growing desire among the largely urban population to make use of rural spaces for recreational activities of all sorts, these values and ideals have been reinforced. This ties in closely with Bryden's 'new rural economy', one that is based on the commoditisation of rural spaces as 'environment', 'culture' and 'heritage' (2002). Thus, the main focus of economic activity in the countryside is no longer primary production. A recent Scottish Parliament Report on the 'Impact of Changing Employment Patterns in Rural Scotland (Rural Development Committee 2001) pointed out that in Scotland there has been a shift in demand away from food and other basic primary products, towards increased demand for services and luxury products. In this Scotland is little different from much of the Western world. This shift in demand, however, has had a major

impact on employment and economic activity in rural areas – most notably a growth in the service sector and a decline in the traditional industries of agriculture and manufacturing. Jedrej and Nuttall (1996) discussing the impact of rural re-population in the Gairloch area, point out that crofters and fishermen – the traditional 'producers' in the area – are being marginalised, as their own industries decline, and other sectors, such as tourism, expand.

Traditional industries such as agriculture, fishing, quarrying and forestry are based on the physical exploitation of natural resources. They are being replaced, gradually, by economic activities that utilise much less tangible resources – values such as heritage, naturalness, rurality and aesthetic beauty. The function of rural areas has changed, and continues to do so. The 'rural goods' that they produce for the consumer are less frequently basic primary goods. Instead, rural areas (and rural entrepreneurs) are now engaged in the production of 'experiences', of signs and symbols that are of increasing economic value in today's marketplace Cultural and environmental heritage, in their various forms are used as resources on which to base economic enterprises. Mark Shucksmith, giving evidence to the Scottish Parliament Rural Affairs Committee, summarises the situation well: "Rural space – the countryside – is becoming a consumption good. It is becoming something that people from the towns like to consume, either by going there or by living there. It is not often where they do their production, but it is increasingly where they do their consumption" (Rural Affairs Committee 2000). This phenomenon, and the need to respond to it, has been recognised by the agricultural sector for some time. The keynote speech of the National Agricultural Conference ('Stimulating the Rural Economy – New Approaches', 1992) suggests that meeting the needs of the growing urban population provides an opportunity for development of the rural economy. Specifically, it is suggested, "the urban majority, which determine the political possibilities, is likely to resist...changes in the rural scene which conflict with its preconception about 'what goes on in the country'" (Anonymous 1992). One could go further, and suggest that, increasingly, the urban population will not stop at simply 'resisting change' in the countryside. Rather, it now expects to be able to experience 'what goes on in the countryside' in a variety of ways. These vary across the whole range of rural activities – from tourism to recreation to other, less tangible forms of consumption, which together form the bulk of the 'new rural activities'. We have already noted the intensely post-modern nature of the tourist industry, and the preoccupation with 'sign and symbol' (Urry 1990, *The Tourist Gaze*). Curran & Blackburn suggest that as post-modern culture continues to develop in contemporary political economies, such as that of the UK,

there will be a "further fragmentation of tastes and lifestyles [leading to] more heterarchical as opposed to the hierarchical social and cultural structures of the past" (1991: 186). Small firms, they suggest, are expected to benefit from this process of market fragmentation, as they are well placed to serve such post-modern markets.

4.8 Conclusion

This chapter has covered a wide range of subject areas, ranging from a review of the ongoing sustainable development debate, through an exploration of enterprise and its place in the UK economy, to a detailed examination of recent changes in rural employment and the rural economy of Scotland. The aim has been to set the scene for this research that follows, and to demonstrate the complex, interdisciplinary nature of the subject area. Another aim has been to identify and draw out themes from the current body of research that have to potential to suggest the direction of future research. The following points can be taken from the literature review as a summary of a complex chapter that covers many different subject areas, all of which are pertinent to the overall research theme.

- Sustainable Development is a normative concept, socially-constructed and contested at all levels. In its current incarnation, the sustainable development ethic is anthropocentric, focusing on 'quality-of-life' for humans.
- Small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) are important as employment providers in the UK economy (up to 50% jobs in the UK in 1991: Storey 1994). SMEs are especially important in the rural economy, providing jobs and services in remote areas.
- Personality trait theory does not adequately explain the process of enterprise: interactionism, a combination of personal and environmental factors may do.
- With the ongoing decline in the primary sector, the importance of secondary and tertiary sector employment in increasingly important in rural areas.
- Changing public values relating to rural areas has led to the emergence of the 'new rural economy' (Bryden 2002), which is based on the exploitation of largely intangible sources of value: environment, culture, heritage.

- The emergence of the 'new rural economy' in tangent with continuing post-modern market fragmentation provides increasing opportunities for enterprising individuals to establish new businesses based on intangible values.

Thus a logical path can be traced through a diverse and complex research area. The end point, the 'new rural economy' and the opportunities therein are to be the subject of the research proper, and will be discussed further. At this point, suffice to say that the scene has been set (the rural economy), the important actors identified (rural people, local and in-migrant) and the first clues examined (intangible values relating to environment, culture and heritage).

CHAPTER 5

Methodology

5.1 Introduction

In order to explore the research questions in a meaningful way, appropriate research methodologies must be selected and this choice of methodology needs to be justified. Conversely, it is useful to explain why certain other methodologies have been rejected as being inappropriate to the research subject area. Previously, in chapter 2, where the philosophical underpinnings of the research were examined, it was established that an 'interpretative' approach would be the most appropriate in the context of this current study. Where a positivistic position argues for the existence of an 'objective reality' that can be researched and ultimately explained by the researcher, an interpretative approach acknowledges that, epistemologically, 'reality' is what is experienced, and therefore inherently subjective. Importantly, the aim here is not simply to describe what one observes: although descriptive studies can be of interest, they run the risk of being 'snapshot' pictures which cannot be incorporated into wider fields of knowledge or related to any wider social theories. At any level above the most basic, the aim must be to go beyond the 'what' questions to examine the 'why' and 'how' questions. It is not enough simply to describe what is observed: the aim must be to explain these observations, and this is the ultimate aim of this current study.

The aim of this section, then, is to describe and justify the research methodologies used. Firstly, the philosophy underlying the research methodology will be discussed and considered. The techniques and methodologies that have been adopted will be detailed, for each stage of the research. A reflective approach will be taken, in order to provide an honest account of the research process, as it actually happened. As explained below, such explanations from the researcher are an important element of interpretative research as they assist the reader in making his or her own judgement about the validity of the research process. Finally, finer detail concerning the sampling

and data collection process will be provided, with an account of problems encountered and overcome.

5.2 The Philosophy of the Research Methodology

The range of research methodologies and techniques available to researchers today is vast. Some have been developed for highly specific purposes while other approaches are applicable across a wide spectrum of different disciplines. Research methodologies fall in and out of favour all the time: witness the ongoing dispute between the currently 'unfashionable' positivists and the *avant-garde* post-modernists. As a researcher, it is important to stay aware of new developments in one's field, and to constantly seek to improve existing methodologies, but jumping on bandwagons is perhaps to be avoided. Robson sums up the current situation thus: "These differences [of techniques] fall within two main traditions which continue to engage in sporadic warfare. One is variously labelled as positivistic, natural science-based, hypothetico-deductive, quantitative or merely 'scientific'; the other as interpretative, ethnographic or qualitative – among several other labels" (1993: 10).

Research in social science has been dominated for many years by a positivist philosophy – the 'scientific' approach to which Robson refers – no doubt a reflection of its early success in the natural sciences. This can be easily identified in the ecological sciences, considering the reliance of conservationists on 'scientific proof' to back up what are often value-based arguments (Harrison & Burgess 1994). The literature review suggests that values are likely to be a dominant influence in this research, and the highly contested nature of these values means that it is unlikely that a positivist approach would be appropriate. Rosen states that "social process is not captured by hypothetical deduction, co-variances and degrees of freedom" (1991: 8), echoing Burgess, Limb and Harrison when they point out, "quantitative analyses are not suitable media for discovering feelings and meanings for environment" (1998a: 309). While ecological value, pollution levels and landscape quality may be evaluated using a quantitative approach, in an attempt to rigorously separate fact from belief, the environmental perceptions and values with which we are concerned are far less tangible. Fact and belief cannot be easily separated when dealing with human cognition. Despite the best efforts of environmental economists and others, we cannot readily count or measure 'values' or other "uniquely human" factors, such as "free will, choice, chance, morality and the like" (Hughes 1990: 19). But what tools are available to us, if we cannot use the score-cards of the positivists?

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environment'. As such it is imperative that our research methods allow us to access and understand the complex, untidy, subjective world of our research subjects.

Weber emphasises that such an understanding can be only achieved through an 'empathic' approach to research. He suggests that "for verifiable accuracy of the meaning of a phenomenon, it is a great help to be able to put one's self imaginatively in the place of the actor and thus sympathetically to participate in his experience..." (1927). The researcher who seeks to understand social behaviour needs to become familiar with the 'life-world' of those he or she seeks to understand. This is what Rosen means when he says, "understanding social process involves getting inside the world of those generating it" (1991: 8). We know from experience that this world is going to be messy and subjective, not the clear, rational 'laboratory' required by those who are bent on taking an 'objective approach' to studying human behaviour. This is precisely why an empirical 'scientific' approach is not appropriate to this study. It is too rigid, and its pursuit of some objective position that lies well away from the irrationality of the subjective world, would not allow us to get close enough to the subjects of our research, in order to understand them.

5.2.1 Taking a Phenomenological Approach

In his discussion of the concept *verstehen*, Giddens (1984) draws on a particular epistemological approach known as *phenomenology*. Pepper defines phenomenology thus:

> "**Phenomenology:** a method of enquiry developed by Edmund Husserl, which focuses on the nature of phenomena as experienced through human consciousness and perception... Because we can never know the world around us objectively, only through the medium of our own consciousness' (individual and group) it focuses attention on *how we perceive and structure* that world. Since each of us experiences the world differently, it is impossible to make law-like generalisations about it, as classical science attempts to do. Rather than so-called 'objective facts', then, we attempt to grasp intuitively the inner experiences of people and what is significant to them about the world immediately around them: 'their life-world". Having done so we can then describe that life-world and our own."
>
> Pepper (1996: 15)

This description encompasses many of the points that have been made so far regarding the appropriate choice of methodology for this study. Specifically, Pepper points out the inappropriateness of a positivistic approach when dealing with 'real life' human situations.

There are several other interesting points in Pepper's description of phenomenology that can be tied back to our previous discussions. It suggests a position on the nature/man dualism discussed in the literature review, by emphasising that man is not separate from nature as such. Rather, it is *we* who shape our own worlds, "imposing structure, meaning and value onto it via our consciousness" (ibid: 14). The contested existence of a so-called 'objective world' is simply not relevant. This fits in very well with our observation that 'forms of nature' such as wilderness areas and 'rurality' are essentially social constructions, whose value comes from within ourselves: they are socially constructed myths (Rennie-Short 1991). Comparisons can be also drawn between Pepper's 'life-world' and Cooper's 'environment as *milieu*' (1992). Both refer to a 'network of meanings' or 'field of significance'. Cooper suggests that a zoologist can never 'know' a badger's sett in the same way the badger can. One could make the same point with regard to ecologists and the environments they work within: they may 'know' them as ecologists, but they don't necessarily have the same understanding about them as people living within them do. For the purposes of this study, it is unlikely that they will evaluate the quality of these environments in the same way, as Shin & Jackson (1997) found while examining 'wilderness quality' as perceived by 'users' and 'professionals' . All the more reason then, for us to base our approach on a phenomenological framework, which aims to explore the world of people living within 'high quality natural environments' rather than identifying the 'objective' characteristics of the environments themselves through biodiversity counts and rare species lists. An early paper by Falk & Pinhey makes the case for a phenomenological underpinning to attempts to define 'rurality'. They suggested that because dominant understandings of the meaning of 'rurality' tended to be created and promulgated by 'professionals', or "interested practitioners", perspectives had been pursued "which largely ignore[d] the actor's view of the world" (1978: 547). By taking a phenomenological approach in this current study, the intention is that the 'actors' view of the world' can be elucidated and understood.

5.3 Methodological Approach

Phenomenology, along with ethnomethodology (Garfinkel 1967) and symbolic interaction (Blumer 1969), falls broadly within the interpretivist sociological tradition (Mason 1996). As such, they have

become widely associated with the use of qualitative research methodologies. By adopting a phenomenological approach, as advocated by Falk and Pinhey (1978), the aim is to use qualitative data gathering and analysis techniques in order to build up a detailed description of conscious experiences and meanings.

In recent years, qualitative techniques have gained favour in various fields of research. In human geography, for example, such techniques allow one to explore "the realities of everyday lives as they are experienced and explained by the people who live them" (Burgess, Limb & Harrison 1988a: 310). In the field of psychology, previously dominated by quantitative and 'scientific' methods of research, qualitative research techniques are being increasingly used. Henwood & Pidgeon (1992) for example, make a convincing case for the adoption of qualitative methodologies that allow theory to be grounded in the data – and the use of 'grounded theory' itself.

The techniques used in such an investigation are largely interviews (structured and unstructured), questionnaires and participant observation – all of which are time-consuming and demanding. Many researchers associate the use of such 'subjective' techniques of data collection with the broader use of qualitative methodologies. However, data collected using these techniques is often coded in a way that allows it to be statistically analysed and tested: in effect such research methodologies involve "quantifying qualitative data" (Strauss & Corbin 1998: 11). Moser and Kalton's *Survey Methods in Social Investigation* (1971) is a good example of this approach, which seeks to analyse qualitative data using statistical methods. Truly 'qualitative research', on the other hand, involving qualitative *analysis* is the "nonmathematical process of interpretation, carried out for the purpose of discovering concepts and relationships in raw data and then organising these into a theoretical explanatory scheme" (Strauss & Corbin 1998: 11). Individual researchers may choose to adopt such techniques for different reasons, depending on their philosophical orientation, their academic background and research field, among other factors. Equally, many researchers have decided that the 'mathematical process' of the supposedly objective, hypothetico-deductive approach does not allow them to uncover the knowledge or understanding that they seek, while "qualitative methods can be used to obtain the intricate details and phenomena such as feelings, thought processes and emotions that are difficult to extract or learn about through more conventional research methods" (ibid).

Critics of qualitative methodologies often challenge the validity of such research, on the basis that it is 'subjective' and 'merely descriptive and impressionistic'. It is important to be able to counter such claims. Qualitative research involves people and, more importantly, what people say and what they do, and, as such, will always be "subjective". While the 'scientific' approaches to environmental quality make claims to objectivity, they are less relevant when the subject matter is people. As Zube says "in social science data, objectivity cannot necessarily be equated with accuracy" (1980: 6). Instead of limiting oneself to poor objectivity, researchers in the social sciences may well be better served by the pursuit of sound qualitative research.

Mason suggests some ways to achieve a high standard of qualitative research:

> "Qualitative research should
>
> - ...be *systematically and rigorously conducted*...
> - ...be *strategically conducted, yet flexible and contextual*...
> - ...involve critical self-scrutiny by the researcher, or *active reflexivity*...
> - ...produce *social explanations to intellectual puzzles*...
> - ...produce social explanations which are *generalisable* in some way..."
>
> (1996: 5)

The above guidelines are intended to help practitioners of qualitative research to deflect criticisms aimed at their chosen methodologies relating to validity and the subjectivity of the researcher. It is intended that the research in this thesis will adhere to these guidelines as closely as possible. The practicalities of adhering to these rigorous standards are detailed below, in the context of this current study.

5.4 Using Grounded Theory

Having established above that qualitative techniques are the most appropriate to use in the context of this research, the task remains to develop an 'organising framework' on which to hang these methodologies. Taking into account the aim of the study, which is to develop understanding, and from this understanding, theories that explain the phenomena that we observe, it is clear that an approach that pushes the researcher towards inductive reasoning will be needed. There are no clear 'hypotheses' to begin with, only a rather vague area of interest. The opposite approach, that of deductive reasoning, demands that the researcher begin with a clear aim to test particular

hypotheses which are clearly stated in advance of the research, and which fall clearly under the auspices of the 'hypothetico-deductive' school of thought. This is not suitable for our particular needs. Mason describes inductive reasoning as the 'theory comes last' approach thus:

> "Theory... is developed from or through data generation and analysis. If you are developing theory in this way, you will probably begin the process of analysis whilst data generation is underway, and use a version of theoretical sampling to augment this. You will scrutinise your data so that you can develop explanations which appear to fit them"
>
> (1996: 141)

Mason is referring to a particular methodological approach when she makes the above statement regarding theory generation: 'Grounded Theory', first established by Glaser & Strauss (1967) and developed in subsequent works (Glaser & Strauss 1967, Strauss 1987, Strauss & Corbin 1988), and discussed extensively elsewhere (Turner 1981, Martin & Turner 1987). In this context qualitative methods of data collection are used specifically to aid the generation of theory. The term 'grounded theory' was originally intended to refer to theory that has been generated in the course of close examination and analysis of qualitative data, such as that gathered during in-depth interviews. The guiding aim of 'theory generation' has become central to much social research: the classical scientific process of 'testing' hypotheses generated by 'experts' is no longer perceived to be the principal or only aim of such research.

The 'doing' of grounded theory can be described as follows. Firstly, when the aim is to generate theory from data, rather than begin with a definite hypothesis, initial rounds of sampling are intentionally made as wide as possible to allow the maximum breadth of data to be collected. As a result, the researcher is likely to be faced with a very broad, amorphous mass of data. The aim is to allow a range of concepts and categories to emerge from this mass of unstructured data, using an open-ended indexing system. This requires the researcher to work systematically through the basic transcripts of the data, generating labels to identify the concepts and categories as they are deemed relevant. At this early stage, the researcher has maximum flexibility to label these as she or he sees fit. This indexing and coding is an essentially creative and reflective activity on the part of the researcher, who must be alert to every possibility to be found in the data. However, this

creativity is balanced by the need, as described by Glaser and Strauss (1967), for these low-level descriptions to *fit* the data well. The overall method will only succeed if the theory generated is faithful to the data itself, and this can be achieved through balancing the interpretative powers of the researcher with the need to achieve this fit between data and theory. This requirement remains an imperative of the theory generation process as it proceeds through successive rounds of data collection and analysis.

5.4.1 Defending the Rigor of Grounded Theory Techniques

As Henwood & Pidgeon (1992) point out, there seem to be few set procedures when it comes to actually analysing the data itself in this way. The original authors, Glaser & Strauss (1967) have been criticised for not providing precise enough 'instructions' for the application of grounded theory techniques (see Caelli 2001). In an effort, perhaps, to counter such criticisms, Strauss & Corbin (1998) propose a highly technical and complex set of data coding procedures. Although such technical approaches attempt to increase 'rigour' they may make the technique less open to the very subjects being investigated (Caeli 2001). Hall & Callery (2001), for example, suggest that by emphasising the technical aspects of data analysis in this way, there is a danger of neglecting the "social construction of data" (2001: 260). Specifically, they criticise the 'rules for rigour' developed by Strauss & Corbin (1998) on the grounds that "they assume that a natural world is available for observation and analysis" (2001: 260) and that they do not acknowledge that "interview and observational data must be created during the process of data collection" (ibid.) – the 'social construction of knowledge' during the interaction between interviewer and interviewee. Stanley & Wise went as far as to accuse the original authors of "inductive positivism" (1983: 152). This is an important issue in terms of this current research. Access to the 'social construction of knowledge' will be a vital component of this study, and it can only be accessed via the understandings, beliefs and attitudes of the respondents. This issue will be discussed further below, when the actual field research process is explained and realities of interviewing are discussed.

Hall & Callery (2001) suggest some ways in which the rigor of grounded theory research can be improved, without compromising the interactivity and social nature of the data collected, namely through increased 'reflexivity' and 'relationality'. Henwood & Pidgeon make the point that "there are no methodological criteria capable of guaranteeing the *absolute* accuracy of research" (1992: 23). In this situation, they suggest a number of positive steps a researcher using grounded theory

techniques can take to ensure good practice in terms of 'rigour' while ensuring the creativity of the researcher is not stifled. These include: adhering to the need for theory to fit the data; the integration of theory at many levels of abstraction; reflexivity on the part of the researcher; building up documentary evidence of the analysis process; using theoretical sampling techniques and negative case analysis; maintaining a sensitivity to negotiated realities; attempting to ensure the 'transferability' (note, not the generalisability) of the theories. Many of these propositions fit well with the recommendations of Mason (1996) outlined previously, while applying more directly to the practice of grounded theory itself.

5.4.2 Taking a Reflective Approach to Social Research

Hall & Callery (2001) are, of course, not the first researchers to emphasise the importance of reflexivity in successful social research. It is widely accepted that a reflective approach to qualitative research can reduce the likelihood of a haphazard approach being adopted, and can help to ensure the rigor of the developing theories. Mason, as quoted above, suggests that "qualitative research should involve critical self-scrutiny by the researcher, or *active reflexivity*" (1996: 5). A 'reflective practitioner', is one who constantly takes stock of their own actions, choices and motivations within the research process, scrutinising what they do, and how, and why, they do it. Thus, the role of the researcher within the research is subject to the same critical scrutiny as the research process he or she adopts, as is the data collected through this process. Qualitative research is both situational and contextual: the research process should be suited to the context in which the research is being carried out. A reflective approach allows the researcher to constantly check and re-check the validity of his or her approach within the particular research context. The subjects of qualitative research are living, dynamic and complex beings. A 'blueprint' approach to qualitative research strategies is neither appropriate nor desirable. As will be discussed below, the reflective approach infiltrates all aspects of the research process. In the case of grounded theory, it informs the collection of data through in-depth, semi-structured interviews, and it guides the theoretical sampling process, by which 'appropriate' respondents are identified. It informs the entire process and is an important factor in maintaining rigor in the research.

5.4.3 Building Grounded Theory – A Practical Approach

It was suggested above that the original authors (Glaser & Strauss 1967) have provided few guidelines for explaining how to actually *do* grounded theory research, in practice (Caelli 2001).

The previous discussion focused on the 'rigour' of the resulting theories and the validity of the technique, but does little to explain the practical aspects of carrying out field research using grounded theory techniques. Henwood & Pidgeon suggest a number of "more or less routine operations that help the researcher move toward a conceptually rich understanding, and systematic integration of the low level categories into a coherent theoretical account" (1992: 21). These are listed as follows:

- theoretical saturation of categories (coding of instances until no new examples of variation are found);
- writing detailed definitions of categories that have achieved saturation;
- writing memoranda recording all of the analyst's observations during the course of the analysis;
- linking categories together, often involving the creation of new overarching categories at higher levels of abstraction and;
- seeking more data where this appears necessary to elucidate aspects of the emerging theory.

(ibid: 21-22)

When compared to the highly technical approach proposed by Strauss and Corbin (1998), the approach outlined above seems almost too simplistic to be a true representation of what is, in practice, a complex and challenging process. Grounded theory and qualitative research in general should not be seen as an easy option. However, the important elements still remain – the emphasis on 'goodness of fit', for example, to balance the 'creativity' of the analysis process. The emphasis on the importance of 'constant comparison' as an analytical tool is also correctly emphasised above. In practice, this is the key to actually building theories grounded in data – this constant revision of the data, and of the emergent categories and theories, ensures that categories are thoroughly tested for 'fit' with the data.

5.4.4 Theoretical Sampling in Grounded Theory

Having examined the techniques involved in grounded theory research, it is obvious that there is an unusually close relationship between the way data is collected, and its subsequent analysis. Conventional scientific research tends to feature one initial burst of carefully planned data collection at the outset. The results are gathered, analysed and conclusions are drawn. At this

point, that particular 'experiment' or 'research event' may well be considered complete and the hypothesis can be approved, rejected or modified as appropriate (although, of course, the results of the experiment may well stimulate further research). Grounded theory differs greatly from this process. In particular, the close interplay between the sampling, data collection and analysis means that they cannot be thought of as discrete stages in the research process. Each stage constantly informs and re-informs subsequent rounds of collection and analysis, collection and analysis. Henwood, & Pidgeon, citing Bulmer (1979) describe this constant interplay between data collection and conceptualisation as "a 'flip-flop' between ideas and research experience" (1992: 22).

It follows then, that the sampling procedures associated with grounded theory research are likely to differ greatly from those associated with more positivistic research techniques. In particular random sampling, which seeks to identify a 'representative' sample of a population, is inappropriate with grounded theory techniques ands instead early stages of the data collection / analysis process are sampled using essentially 'open' or 'convenience' sampling methods. At this point, the researcher has few fixed ideas or hypotheses – more a general interest in a subject area, and possibly some 'pre-understanding' developed through extensive reading around the subject. The first rounds of data collection are seeking breadth: the aim is to get as wide a range of responses as possible. As subsequent rounds of data analysis and collection proceed, the questioning becomes more focused on seeking out the knowledge or understanding which will allow theory to be further generated or tested.

This type of sampling is known as 'purposive' or 'theoretical' sampling. Some researchers have wrongly equated this type of sampling with 'interference' on the part of the researcher, and have suggested that directing questioning towards specific, selected individuals will introduce a damaging element of bias into the research. However, the alternative of representative or random sampling sits very uncomfortably within the framework of grounded theory. Because theories are being constructed in tandem with successive rounds of data collection, it is a basic requirement that emergent theories can be refined during questioning – how else is the researcher to verify or otherwise reject the emergent categories of response? Punch describes the principle of theoretical sampling as "the idea that subsequent data collection should be guided by theoretical developments that emerge in the analysis" (1998:167). Therefore, theoretical sampling is a

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thinks the latter wants or expects to hear – rather than giving a true account of his or her 'lived experience'. The partial nature of the subject's story, the need to code, categorise and typologise the story, and the numerous levels of 're-presentation' which exist between "the 'primary experience' of the subject to the... researcher's textual presentation of findings" (ibid.) can cause the respondent's story to be misreported. To counter this 'fracturing' of the 'ideal text', they suggest that certain steps can be taken. For example, while we acknowledge that the 'ideal text' is not available to us, certain 'delimited segments' of people's lives may be, and through these "we may get *closer* to people's lived experiences" (ibid: 103). That is, rather than attempting to understand our subjects' lives in their complex totality, we should instead focus our energies on achieving a deeper understanding of the specific issues to which our own research relates.

Certain aspects of the interview technique can also help increase the value of the interview as a data collection tool. Interviewees will respond in many different ways to the person interviewing them, much as they would to any other person with whom they interact. The main criteria should be perhaps, to present oneself as a 'good listener', someone who shares some basic common values or experiences with the respondent, yet appears to be neutral, and someone who will ensure the confidentiality of the data. All these efforts will hopefully encourage the respondent to share more fully his or her 'lived experience' of their world.

Theoretical sensitivity, that is, being reflective (and honest) during the collection and analysis of qualitative data, can be introduced in several ways. For example, Guba (1990) suggests that predispositions on the part of the researcher should be made clear to the reader, so that the latter can make judgements on the interpretations offered by the researchers, in the light of their own opinions relating to the research topic. The way in which a researcher "probes for detail, clarity or explanation and non-verbal gestures and responses" can influence the shape of any interview (Schatzman and Strauss, (1973) cited in Hall and Callery 2001:263). It is also possible for the researcher to be *too* reflexive, resulting in the obscuring of the respondent's voice as the interviewer 'speaks over the top' of the respondent. In practice, qualitative studies that include a reflexive discussion enable readers to judge for themselves the quality of the data collection process. This is an important part of any research process. Even in supposedly objective 'scientific' research, the researcher must be aware of how his or her perspectives are operationalised within the field research, and this applies particularly strongly in the case of interviews because the data

itself is born out of an interaction (a 'research conversation') between two people. The aim of the reflexive account should be to lay bare the 'rules of engagement' in this interaction.

At the end of the day, there are no 'perfect' or 'ideal' research methodologies in any discipline. As researchers we do not operate in an ideal world. Our aim should be to consider carefully the various modes of enquiry available to us, and to select from this diverse set the methods and techniques that suit our research needs, and ourselves, most appropriately.

5.6 Multiple Methods of Exploration

It should be pointed out that in the context of this current study, qualitative data gathering and analysing techniques are seen to be the most appropriate and potentially most valuable methods to be used, as described above. However, it was decided that in order to test the validity of the analysis and subsequent theories developed, a quantitative technique would also be used. This took the form of a postal survey questionnaire that was distributed to respondents in the study area. The intention was to use the quantitative data collected to test and to hopefully verify the explanatory framework that has been developed from the qualitative work. This technique of using more than one methodological approach to investigate the same aspect of social life is known as 'triangulation'. Hobson describes this particular use of 'triangulation' as 'between-method' or 'cross-method triangulation' – where the intention is to test "the validity and / or reliability of one's research methods and data" (2000: 9). He goes on to point out that although cross-method triangulation cannot guarantee the absolute validity of the research methods, it can allow the researcher to have more confidence in the validity of the data: "the researcher's claims for the validity of his / her findings will be enhanced where both qualitative and quantitative tools provide mutual confirmation" (ibid: 10).

The technique selected was to use a quantitative research tool that allowed abstract concepts such as values, perceptions and attitudes to be explored. Attitudes are generally understood to refer to a predisposition to react in a certain way to a stimulus. They are learned, or acquired through experience, rather than being inborn. Several different elements are seen to comprise an 'attitude', namely a cognitive element (knowing and believing), an affective element (liking or disliking) and a conative (or behavioural) element. Opinions vary as to the appropriateness of this model, some preferring to relate only to the affective element, which is probably the widest understanding of the

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and so, to measure [attitudes] more accurately a sample of beliefs covering a range of aspects of the attitude needs to be obtained..." (Moser & Kalton 1971: 351). The idea is that the effect of 'idiosyncrasies' can be reduced if the attitude measurement can be spread over a set of beliefs. At the other extreme, in relation to this particular study, the sheer range and number of questions that could potentially be asked, relating to environmental quality and rural enterprise is vast. The danger in limiting the list of possible statements is that valuable perspectives may be lost in the practical interests of usability. Yet practical considerations must also be taken into account if an acceptable rate of return is to be achieved: there is always the danger of constructing a questionnaire that is so long that respondents simply do not complete it.

Having constructed a questionnaire, distributed it to the respondents, and received the completed forms, the question remains of how to analyse and interpret the results. The details of the methodology adopted in this current study will be outlined fully below, but some general observations are appropriate here. Firstly, as the result of the ordinal nature of the scale used, the summary statistic cannot be the mean as would be used in a greater level of scale: a numerical score of 2.5 is meaningless as the divisions between the numbers on the scale are not necessarily equal. Thus, either the mode or median must be used to describe the summary statistic of the dataset, the former providing the most straightforward of these. Secondly, the survey included two open-ended questions, where respondents were asked to explain their reasons for giving a particular response to a statement. The recognised way of dealing with these questions in a survey of this type is to go through the first 20 or 30 replies, noting the various categories of response, with the aim of listing all possible variations. It quickly becomes apparent that certain categories are widely represented among the responses. Once no new categories can be identified, the frequencies of each response category are noted, and the resulting data can be scored and analysed.

There are many guides to the use of scaling methods, some of which date from the heyday of quantitative methodology as a social and psychological research tool (Moser & Kalton 1971 and Edwards 1957, for example). The details of the methodology used in this current study are outlined below, including the construction of the questionnaire survey, and the analysis and presentation of the data. Chapter 8 deals with the interpretation and discussion of the quantitative data and relates it to the findings of the qualitative interviews that are contained in Chapter 7.

5.7 Field Research in Practice

Having discussed some of the underlying ideas and philosophies that have guided the research process, the aim here is to present a comprehensive and understandable account of the research process *as it actually happened*. It is important to do so, as this will allow readers to assess the rigour and validity of the research process, and the theories that subsequently emerge, to be discussed in later chapters.

The three stages of the data collection and analysis will be discussed in turn. There are likely to be overlaps: Stages 1 and 2, for example, use very similar methodological approaches, though the studies themselves are quite distinct. The final Stage 3 stands alone by virtue of its quantitative nature.

For each section, a brief introduction will outline the aims and objectives of that particular Stage of the research. The details of the research are summarised in Tables 5.1, 5.3 and 5.5. The sampling procedures adopted and the method of data collection and recording will be detailed. Finally, a short reflective section will discuss the limitations of the method and any problems encountered and overcome.

5.8 Methodology – Stage 1

Investigating Perceptions of High Quality Environments

The aims of this first stage of the research were twofold. Firstly, there was a need to explore and understand how people living in the study area perceived the quality of the 'natural' or 'rural' environment. Having made the case previously for the need to adopt a social constructivist perspective in identifying 'quality' and specifically 'environmental quality' from the perspective of the respondents, rather than to simply accept a 'professional' definition, it was necessary to develop an understanding of 'social constructions of high quality environments'. This was done as described below, using qualitative techniques that were guided by the 'organising framework' of the grounded theory methodology as discussed previously. The secondary aim of this stage was – quite simply – to allow the researcher to become familiar with the practicalities of qualitative research in the field, not being particularly experienced in this respect. Thus, in this respect, it was used as a pilot or

training exercise, in preparation for the main Stage 2 of the research. Table 5.1 below summarises the details of the research process for Stage 1.

Table 5.1 – Details of Research Methodology, Stage 1

Stage 1	Investigating Perceptions of Environmental Quality
Purpose of Research	To explore perceptions of environmental quality held by people living in the study area. To provide an opportunity for the researcher to become familiar with qualitative research techniques.
Sampling	75 respondents, convenience sampling 11 respondents to questionnaires distributed at random through the Perth College internal mail system.
Techniques	Informal, semi-structured 'on-the-street' interviews. Open-ended, semi-structured, questionnaire.
Methodology	Grounded theory data collection and analysis.

Sampling

In the first instance, open sampling was practised, which in practical terms amounts to convenience sampling. "Cheap and dirty" perhaps (Robson 1993), but this approach is appropriate to the first rounds of data collection where there are no established hypotheses to investigate. The first rounds of data collection require relatively large sample numbers to ensure that the breadth of the initial data collection as wide as possible. In practice, the first round of data collection used 25 respondents. The data collected was indeed wide-ranging and allowed the refinement of the interview schedule. Subsequent rounds of data collection gathered responses from a further 50 respondents, including 11 responses to a questionnaire distributed at random to staff at Perth College. Initial rounds of sampling took place in Perth town centre, on weekdays. There was no need to target specific respondents at this stage because the aim was to gather a wide range of responses. As data collection progressed, the location was moved to smaller towns and villages in the study area of Highland Perthshire (Dunkeld, Pitlochry, Aberfeldy), though still targeting people 'on-the-street'. Finally, in order to test and refine the theories developed, the owners and managers of small- and medium-sized enterprises in the study area were approached in the final rounds of data collection.

Data Collection Method

Data was collected through semi-structured, face-to-face interviews carried out 'on-the-street' at a range of locations within the study area. The open form of the questions encouraged respondents to talk freely in response to the questions posed, as well as having a chance to focus more specifically on suggested evaluative criteria. Questions asked simply what people associated with 'high quality environments' and what the phrase meant to them. The association of certain land uses, designations, cultural and aesthetic qualities with high environmental quality were investigated and explored. Respondents were also asked to name a place they identified as being a 'high quality environment', and the reasons why, were explored. In addition, data regarding respondents age and place of residence (rural or urban) was collected (see Table 2). The respondents were engaged in on-the-street interviews in Perth, the small Highland Perthshire towns of Pitlochry, Dunkeld and Aberfeldy, and in various small villages including Ballinluig, Blair Atholl, Dalwhinnie, Laggan and Spean Bridge (see Map 1). Potential respondents were approached and asked whether they would be willing to spend 10 minutes answering some questions. Response rates were approximately 50% for respondents 'on-the-street', rising to about 75% for those approached in their businesses.

Reflecting on the Research Experience

In principle, large sample numbers are usually required in order to compensate for the limitations of open and convenience sampling techniques, in this case a minimum of 50 respondents. In practice, due to certain methodological problems encountered, the initial round of respondents was limited to 25 respondents, then a further 50 respondents in the following rounds. These problems were largely due to the complex nature of the research subject and the lack of 'tried and proven' questionnaire or interview 'blueprints'. The initial rounds of data collection were intended as a pilot exercise as well as a 'first round' of data collection; the intention being to refine the data collection techniques and the interview schedule itself. This had the benefits of allowing the development of useful interviewing techniques and the resolution of practical and technical considerations such as questionnaire length and format, all of which benefited future rounds of data collection and analysis, particularly in the main phase of the research reported below

In practice the interviews were often difficult to carry out. Firstly, the inexperience of the interviewer meant that some false starts were made with regard to the recording of responses, necessitating a

lot of hasty scribbling in bus shelters following completion of each interview. As the interviews were informal, and often out-of-doors, it was not possible to record answers using a hand-held tape recorder. The initial 'capture' of potential respondents was also challenging – perhaps due to 'survey fatigue' in the population at large! Partly as a result of these difficulties, in the latter stages many respondents were approached in their places of work (shops, hotels, cafes, tourist facilities, information centres) rather than 'on-the-street'. This also had the advantage of ensuring the responses were not dominated by tourists, who frequently seemed to outnumber local people in the towns and villages visited. Undoubtedly, being perceived as a 'student' rather than a professional market researcher helped in securing a good response rate despite the 'cold-calling' approach.

On-the-spot interviews of this type are not the ideal situation in which to elicit and record in-depth personal opinions for several reasons, such as an inability to use mechanical recording devices in the outdoors and the necessarily short interview time of 10-15 minutes which precludes the establishment of any relationship between the interviewer and interviewee. One specific problem in this respect was reflected in a ranking exercise which respondents were asked to carry out as part of the interview. Quite simply, this consisted of a list of 'criteria' that had been identified by the researcher (from the literature and previous experience) of issues or features commonly associated with 'high quality environments'. There were a total of 14 items and respondents were simply asked to rank these in order of importance or influence. Many respondents found this very difficult to do on the spot, and to a large extent this part of the exercise was abandoned as a ranking exercise *per se*, though respondents continued to indicate which of the items on the list were of importance to them.

In response to the limitations outlined above, an additional exercise was developed in order to both obtain more in-depth responses, and in an attempt to triangulate the data being obtained through the interviews. 40 questionnaires were distributed to staff members at Perth College through the internal mail system. This method of data collection was limited by response rates (approximately 25%), and by the interviewer being unable to follow up interesting lines of enquiry on the spot. There was the possibility of introducing a minor source of bias to the sampling, in that the College staff population is not necessarily 'representative' of the population at large. For example, the individuals sampled in this group may have an educational level above that of the wider population. However, in practice, the relatively small number of respondents in this group makes the risk of any

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Table 5.2 Details of Research Methodology – Stage 2

Stage 2	Rural Enterprise in the Perceived 'High Quality Natural Environment' of Highland Perthshire
Purpose of Research	To explore and understand how perceptions of environmental quality influence the actions of entrepreneurs located in Highland Perthshire. To develop a model of 'environmental' influences on rural enterprise.
Sampling	50 respondents, initially convenience sampling followed up with theoretical and 'snowball' sampling in later stages. Respondents were selected from database of 610 small businesses in the study area.
Techniques	Formal, in-depth, semi-structured interviews lasting between 30 minutes to several hours recorded by tape recorder and hand written notes.
Methodology	Data collection and analysis by constant comparison & negative case analysis (grounded theory framework)

Sampling

As described above, open sampling was used in the initial stages of the data collection process. As analysis proceeded, theoretical sampling was used to direct interviewing towards the most appropriate respondents. A database of businesses in the study area was created, and used as a sample population from which to select respondents. The database itself was created by amalgamating information available from several key sources, as follows:

- Perth & Kinross Business Directory 2000
- Business listings on 'Heartlander' (Highland Perthshire) website (www.heartlander.scotland.net)
- Business advertisements and listings in the local paper (The 'Comment').
- Local business listings e.g. Tourist Board Accommodation, Activities and Services brochures.
- Word of mouth: this amounts to 'snowball' sampling in practice, where one respondent recommends that the interviewer contact certain other individuals, after having been through the interview process themselves.

The database was kept up to date by frequent reviews, and by using the most up-to-date version of each source listed above. As a result, the database was fairly comprehensive, and gave a good indication of the types and numbers of businesses present in the study area. The only notable lack in the database was likely to be brand new businesses: statistical and contact information on new start-ups in the study area was very difficult to obtain. In addition to the confidentiality laws by which Local Enterprise Companies and their representatives (e.g. the 'Business Shop') are bound, the data itself tends to be collected only at the regional level. The study area used in this research represents only a relatively small, rural part of the region of Perth and Kinross. As such, one would

have to be very wary of using business start-up data as an indication of activity levels over the whole region, which includes the large cities of Dundee and Perth. Thus, regional data is not appropriate for inclusion in the database, although it is reviewed in chapter 7 as part of an overall description of the study area.

In practice, the database was used as a way to store contact information for each business, and as a 'shopping list' from which possible respondents could be selected. It included a description of each business, so it was a fairly straightforward process to identify respondents who were likely to be of interest to the research. A total of 50 respondents were interviewed. Table 5.3 provides a summary of their details.

Sampling for the initial round of data collection was very much open sampling. Eight respondents were selected and interviewed. These respondents were selected on the basis that their businesses represented a wide range of sectors, from outdoor recreation to wildlife conservation to retail. At this point, very little was known about the entrepreneurs themselves – they had to be identified and selected on the basis of their business. This was considered appropriate in the context of this research: it is the form of the business as much as the motivations of the entrepreneurs that was the focus of the research questions.

As the data collection progressed, the sampling pattern gradually became more theoretical and guided by the need to seek out respondents who were likely to hold the relevant information. Again, relevance, not representative-ness, was the aim of the sampling frame. As categories emerged from the data ('environmental businesses', 'non-environmental businesses', 'value-based businesses' for example) respondents that represented these categories were selected to allow the testing and further refinement of theories grounded in the categories. Finally, towards the end of the process, 'extreme' and 'negative' cases were selected in order to test for theoretical saturation, and the validity of the analysis process. Examples of these respondents are discussed in detail in Chapter 7 as part of the analysis and discussion of the data.

Table 5.3 – Details of Respondents and their Businesses, Stage 2

No	Name	L/C	M/F	Current Business	Previous Business and location
1	Jackie	L	F	Jewellery manufacture and sales	None, employee / Blairgowrie
2	James	C	M	Wholefoods store	None, employee / London
3	Charles	C	M	Guest house	None, employee / Germany
4	Neil	C	M	Mountain bike hire, sales, repair	None, student / Aberdeenshire
5	Mary	C	F	Senior ranger	Employed by Atholl estates
6	Jenny	C	F	Vegetarian guest house	None, employee / Edinburgh
7	Eileen	L	F	Camping and caravan site	Family business
8	Jean	C	F	Second hand bookshop	Management consultant / America
9	Elisa	C	F	Grocery shop	None, employee / Birmingham
10	Linda	L	F	Outdoor clothing sales	Employed by owners
11	Richard	C	M	Computer services	Failed computer services
12	Kate	L	F	Pottery production and sales	First business
13	Margaret	L	F	Transport services, car and minibus hire	Family business
14	Ross	L	M	Game processing and sales	Employed by business owners
15	Max	C	M	Wildlife artist	None, employed / England
16	Michael	L	M	Architectural practice	Family business
17	David	L	M	Smokery, production and sales	Family business
18	Tim	C	M	Project management consultancy	None, employee / England
19	Gordon	L	M	Building services	Employed as builder
20	Dave	C	M	Grocery store	None, employee / Perth
21	Alex	C	M	Wildlife artist, gallery	Lifelong career
22	James	C	M	Scuba diving school	None, diver / England
23	John	L	M	Landscape gardening, garden centre, teashop	Family business
24	Susan	C	F	Organic farm shop	None, married into farming
25	Lynn	C	F	Whisky distillery / visitor centre	Employed by owners
26	Greg	C	M	House building, specialist building	None, employee / Surrey
27	Robert	C	M	Self-catering	None retirement business
28	Ellie	C	F	Backpacker hostel	None, employee / Australia
29	Sarah	C	F	Training consultancy	None, employee / Perth
30	Andrew	L	F	Deer farm and campsite	Family business
31	Beth	C	M	Cooking agency	None, freelance chef / London
32	Colin	L	M	Boat hire	Family business
33	Kerr	C	M	Pottery craft and sales	Retirement business / England
34	Murdo	L	M	Mountain bike hire	Retirement business
35	Roddy	C	M	Rafting trips	None, ex-Navy / Manchester
36	Henry	C	M	Tours of religious sites, lectures	None, also a writer / England
37	Joy	C	F	Shiatsu practitioner	None, employee / England
38	Norman	C	M	Media consultancy	None, freelance journalist / England
39	Bill	L	M	Mountain tour guide	None, employed as gamekeeper
40	Helen	C	F	Smithy, decorative and traditional	None, various employment
41	Gordon	C	M	Estate – forestry, farming etc	Inherited estate from family / Ireland
42	George	L	M	Deer farm and smokery	Farmer
43	Fay	C	F	Luxury goods manuf and sales	None, artist / England
44	Janet	C	F	Farm stay, B&B	None, employee, married farmer
45	Harry	C	M	Textiles, luxury goods sales	Employed to manage the business
46	Allan	C	M	Sub post office, shop, tearoom	Espresso bars and restaurant
47	Donald	C	M	Native seed supply, wildflower nursery	None, employee
48	Doreen	C	F	Environmental Consultancy	None, freelance consultancy
49	Graham	C	M	Outdoor activities training, cake decoration, DIY services	None, employee / England
50	Calum	L	M	Wildlife safaris by 4x4	None, employed as gamekeeper

L = local, C = cosmopolitan, M = male, F = female.

Data Collection Method

All respondents were contacted initially by letter, which described the research project to them and requested an opportunity to interview them. One week later, they were contacted by telephone and asked whether they were willing to be interviewed. If they responded positively, a date and location were agreed between interviewer and respondent. In all cases the interviewer visited the respondent either at home or in their place of work, in order to carry out the interview in the most natural setting possible.

The interview form was semi-structured, which meant that standardised questions could be asked of all respondents, while allowing them to expand on certain issues, or introduce new ideas of their own choice. The questions themselves were very broad, relating to business location decision, environmental values, the form of the business, the entrepreneurs' own history and many other issues.

All interviews were tape-recorded using a hand-held machine and notes were taken as *aide memoires*. Similarly, all interviews were transcribed within a few days of being carried out. Each interview lasted between 40 minutes to about two hours.

Reflecting on the Research Experience

In practice the interviews were both enjoyable and highly intriguing. The diversity of the respondents, their interest in and passion for their respective businesses made the data collection process stimulating. Interviewing the respondents *in situ* was a definite positive advantage. At times, informal participant observation took place – when respondents broke off an interview to serve a customer, for example, they would often draw that person into a conversation about the interview, however briefly. It was also very useful to observe different people 'at home' in the very environment about which they were being questioned – they were able to gesture out a window, or open a door and show exactly what they meant by a 'high quality' environment.

As discussed above, an effort was made throughout the interviews to strike a balance between being too remote from, and being too close to, the interviewee. The fact that the researcher has a rural, farming background, and grew up in Perthshire proved quite useful: the researcher had some validity in the eyes of the respondents and would 'know where they were coming from' when

discussing various rural issues. Similarly, care was taken not to present the researcher as holding any extreme views, about anything to which the research was connected, particularly so when contentious issues such as land ownership reform and urban migration to the countryside were discussed.

A reflective approach was adopted at all times, the intention being to constantly scrutinise the on-going research process as it proceeded towards the point of theoretical saturation. The interview schedule was constantly reviewed, to bring in questioning about new themes as they emerged. Certain key questions were always asked and respondents were encouraged to bring up any issues they felt were relevant to the discussion. Finally, at the end of every interview the respondent was asked, "Are there any other issues you would like to talk about, in relation to what we've covered this interview? Is there anything that you feel is important that I haven't asked you about?" The aim was to bring out any issues that had gone untouched by the interview schedule, of which the researcher was not previously aware.

Sampling was a challenging aspect at this stage of the research. As mentioned previously, the database from which the respondents were selected was not necessarily complete because no comprehensive listing of all the SMEs in the study area existed. Farmers, for example, tend not to advertise or be included in business listings, and therefore very few farmers were included in the database – only those with certain diversification activities did get included. In fact, at the point in the research when it was decided to target some of these more elusive businesses, the Foot and Mouth outbreak occurred, and access to farms was not an option. Although disappointing, this was not necessarily a problem in terms of the overall validity of the research. Statistically, farmers represent only a small percentage of the business population in the study area (though their influence through land ownership and the strength of the agricultural lobby is obvious in rural areas). Also, in practice several businesses interviewed turned out to be farm diversification schemes, which allowed the inclusion of several farmers within the respondent sample.

5.10 Methodology – Stage 3

A Survey of Attitudes about Environmental Quality among Rural Entrepreneurs

The aim at this stage was to test or verify the theoretical framework developed from the data collected and analysed in stage 2, and to a lesser extent stage 1, of the research. The quantitative

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sample from this population: 560 is an easily manageable number of potential respondents for a postal survey of this sort, and to limit the sample population (through random sampling, for example) would have served no purpose other than to reduce the potential response rate.

Data Collection Tool – Likert Questionnaire

The survey techniques used in this part of the study are discussed above, namely a Likert scaling questionnaire, designed to give a quantitative indication of personal attitude towards the 'relationship between valued environments and rural enterprise"'. The scale used was simple, consisting of only four points rather than the more common five ('strongly agree', 'slightly agree', 'slightly disagree', 'strongly disagree') in order to prevent respondents 'sitting on the fence' and providing a neutral response The survey consisted of 12 statements in all, each of which related to some aspect of the general research area. Several of the statements used were direct quotes obtained from the interviews carried out in Stage 2: this helped put the survey into language that the respondents could understand, and avoided the use of technical language. In addition, because the survey was developed towards the end of stage 2, it was possible to link the statements with certain explanatory themes and categories that had been developed previously. This was an important requirement to allow the 'testing' of the explanatory framework developed from these themes. In order to facilitate this, the survey questions were designed to represent three specific attitudinal areas that can be identified as being important in the context of the qualitative analysis:

1. Respondent perceptions of the quality of the environment of the study area (Statements 1-5);
2. Respondent attitudes about the business benefits of their location in the study area (Statement 6);
3. Respondent attitudes concerning 'environmental enterprise' (Statements 7-12).

Both positive and negative statements were included in the list. In addition to the Likert statements or 'items', respondents were given the opportunity to expand upon their answers, in their own words, through the inclusion of two open-ended questions in the survey. This technique worked very well in the questionnaire survey carried out in stage 1, and proved a useful source of supplementary data, which was quantified and analysed as outlined previously.

A list of possible statements for inclusion in the survey was tested on a small sample of six respondents. The researcher was present during these tests in order to observe any difficulties encountered and establish the ease of completion, as well as to note any statements that would not prove to be adequately discriminatory. The test group also raised some instances of ambiguous wording, which were remedied for the main postal survey. A total of 12 statements were selected from the remaining list, and the full questionnaire is attached in Appendix 1.

Data Collection Method

Each survey was prefaced with a 'Details' sheet asking the respondent to record the following: name, address, previous address, age, name of business, brief description of business, age of business, number of employees. The aim was to collect some background data from the respondents, similar to that collected in the interviews and to check for any underlying bias in the respondents. Surveys were posted to the respondents along with a cover letter explaining the research project, and providing contact details for the researcher. A copy of the UHI Millennium Institute Research Ethics Statement was also made available, and respondents were assured of confidentiality. As above, a total of 560 surveys were distributed to the respondents, with a total of 139 being returned within the allocated 4 week period (25% response rate).

Reflecting on the Research Process

All in all, this part of the research was a real learning process, and very different from the previous stages in terms of methodology and required knowledge and skills. Constructing a questionnaire of this type is always a compromise between detail and the level of complexity one can expect the respondent to achieve in their answers, and the ability or willingness of the respondent to actually complete and return the survey. The response rate of 25 % is very acceptable for this kind of survey, and no doubt a testament to the simplicity of the questionnaire as well as the targeted distribution of the survey to SMEs in the study area. There is the possibility of the survey being made too simple – but it is very difficult to reduce a piece of research as complex as this one to a few, straightforward statements. This demonstrates once again the limitations of quantitative research methodologies when it comes to researching complex, messy areas such as human values, beliefs and behaviour. Reducing the 'human condition' to something that can be tested objectively does not allow the potential richness of the data to come through. The inclusion of some open-ended questions allowed some respondents to expand on and explain their answers, and for

some even this wasn't enough, as they wrote for more than the question boxes could physically contain. In addition, time constraints meant that the survey data had to be collected prior to the total completion of the analysis of the interview data. Thus, the survey questions had to be developed on the basis of the qualitative analysis at an earlier stage than would necessarily have been ideal.

As shall be outlined in the chapter 8 this survey was useful as a test of the explanatory framework developed from Stage 1 and Stage 2, allowing a greater breadth of inquiry that reached many more individual respondents. However, the richness and depth of detail of the interview data collected and analysed tells us far more about what people do and why they do it – the real aims of this research.

5.11 Summary & Conclusions

The underlying epistemological and ontological perspective outlined in chapter 2 has informed the choice of methodology being adopted in this study. Thus, in line with the broadly interpretivist approach, qualitative methodologies of data collection and analysis have been identified as the most appropriate. The phenomenological approach requires the researcher to 'get inside the world' of the subjects under scrutiny: the grounded theory approach is identified as a methodological framework that is sympathetic to these aims. Overall, the methodologies used reject the positivist view, that 'knowledge' can only come from 'objective facts', and instead actively seek to develop subjective understanding, in order to expose the socially constructed nature of evaluations of environmental quality. However, in the interests of triangulating the data, and providing an opportunity to test the explanatory themes that emerge from the theory generation process, a survey questionnaire is used, and analysed statistically. Thus, the researcher has selected, from the vast range of theories available, those that are most appropriate to both the subject matter and the understanding that is sought. Figure 5.1 below summarises the various sources of data that are required, and the ways in which they have been collected.

Figure 5.1 Research Methods & Data Collected

Data Required / Sought		**Source & Method of Collection**
Working knowledge of the research area	→ → →	Literature review & Participant observation
Theoretical knowledge	→ → →	Literature review
Focal theory & Pre-understanding • Social constructions of environmental quality • Environmental and rural enterprise	→ → →	Specific literature review
Contextual Knowledge	→ → →	Interviews within the study area
Specific respondent information	→ → →	In-depth interviews
Confirmation / Rejection of theoretical analysis through testing of data	→ → →	Negative case analysis
Testing of overall emergent theories	→ → →	Survey questionnaire

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actor's view of the world (as identified by Falk and Pinhey 1978), rather than a *scientific* or *objective* definition of quality.

6.1.1 Methodological and Semantic Issues

The first issue that emerged in the initial round of interviews was – in some ways – a question of semantics. As we have seen in the preceding literature review, words such as 'environment', 'natural' and 'nature' are highly contested terms. They are also inherently 'value-laden' so it was important to consider whether the use of such terms could unintentionally guide or bias the responses of interviewees. For example, to question respondents about 'natural environments' in rural Scotland could be seen to be inappropriate. As discussed in the literature review, despite the outwardly 'natural' appearance of many rural parts of the Highlands and Islands, they have in fact been inhabited and directly influenced by man for many centuries. The aim then, was to find a way of asking people about the rural environment, without actively directing their thoughts into this 'contested' sphere – that of apparent 'naturalness'. This issue might well emerge in the data, but it was important to allow it to do so of its own accord rather than to 'point' the respondents in this direction. The challenge then was to find a phrase which could be used in the questionnaires and interviews which would focus the respondent's thoughts on the same kinds of environments upon which the research itself is focused (the study area of Highland Perthshire), without overly using terms such as 'natural' which might unduly influence the responses of the interviewees – a research "Catch-22" situation indeed. To address this issue a number of alternatives were considered and tested in the pilot interviews.

Although the word 'natural' was used in the first few interviews, it seemed to confuse respondents because the questionnaire went on to ask them about land uses, settlement patterns and development issues, as if such aspects of the 'natural environment' did not lie easily with the word 'natural'. Similarly, when the wording was altered to 'high quality environments', one respondent pointed out that *"urban environments could be of high quality, architecturally"*, not a desirable interpretation because although there was no wish to bias the responses in any way, the research itself was directly focused on rural areas and needed to be kept within these boundaries if the overall 'remote rural' focus was to be maintained. As Zube (1990) points out 'environment' has a multitude of different meanings, 'learning environments' and 'living environments' for example. Hence to question people about 'high quality environments' could result in a field of enquiry that is

open to too wide a range of interpretations, and might increase the risk of collecting inappropriate and irrelevant data.

For the second round of interviews, the wording was changed to 'high quality rural or 'natural' environments'. The intention was that this would minimise the influence of the term 'natural', while focusing attention away from the urban environment and allowing for the inclusion of rural industry and even the effects of the perceived 'rural idyll' in the investigation. Obviously, there are no perfect solutions to this kind of dilemma, as discussed in the Methodology section (chapter 5). Language is inherently subjective. The use of language in qualitative research will always be a case of using one's judgement and accepting the limitations within.

6.2 Talking about 'High quality 'natural' or rural environments'

The following section presents the analysis of the data and the categories generated from this analysis, as well as a discussion of the emergent theories that result. The inter-related nature of the data collection / analysis / categorisation / theory generation processes, as outlined in chapter 5 make the discrete reporting of each stage – as might be expected in conventional scientific research – inappropriate, and unlikely to present a clear picture of the overall theory generation process. Therefore, this section incorporates both the data analysis and subsequent discussion of the explanatory themes.

6.2.1 Identifying & Describing 'High quality rural or natural environments'

To begin with, respondents were asked to answer the following general question to investigate their understanding of 'high quality natural / rural environments'. The aim was to generate a broad range of responses, which could subsequently be categorised and explored in more detail:

1. *Describe in your own words what a high quality rural / natural environment is for you. Outline the important features of a high quality rural / natural environment.*

Several categories of response can be identified from the data generated, in terms of specific themes that were found to be present or absent in the responses. It is important to note that there was a high degree of overlap between individual responses. That is, one response could potentially be included in one or more of the categories outlined below. Even at this early stage in the research, this demonstrates the inadequacy of adopting a "uni-dimensional description" (Halfacree

1995: 4) of environmental quality and lends weight to our contention that to adopt just one perspective – such as any one of the scientific approaches discussed in the literature review – is limiting.

The categories of response were labelled as followed: Lack of Development, Environmental / Aesthetic and Functional Value, each of which are discussed below.

Lack of Development Responses in this group focused on the undeveloped (perhaps underdeveloped) nature of certain locations as characterising "high quality rural / natural environments". They emphasised features such as emptiness, open spaces and lack of obvious human intrusion. Some examples include:

"Lots of space…"

"No factories or main roads…"

"Somewhere without towns or too many buildings or factories…"

"Miles from anywhere!"

On the other hand, certain types of human settlements are seen as acceptable or even to be expected within a 'high quality natural / rural environment', namely small villages or widely spaced dwellings:

"low density housing…"

"low density habitation…"

"small towns or villages – no big cities" .

Halfacree (1995) notes that some 68% of respondents to his study of 'social constructions of the rural' emphasised this aspect of 'rurality', specifically their understanding of rural areas as places with little or no visual evidence of human 'intrusion'. Yet, while in his survey this aspect was taken to be largely descriptive of 'rurality', in the context of this study it can be seen as an *evaluative* judgement on the part of the subjects. Respondents, as above, frequently referred to a lack of obvious human presence as a *positive* indicator of 'high quality'. This category is closely linked with perceptions of 'remoteness'. Valued areas are identified as those that lack obvious features of human activity – large settlements, roads, industrial developments and such like. This is demonstrated in the comment, '*Miles from anywhere!"* – the 'anywhere' of the respondent presumably meaning something along the lines of 'anywhere developed by humans'. It follows then

that remoteness appears to be considered an important evaluative element of the quality of a natural environment for many respondents.

Environmental / Aesthetic As one would expect, many of the respondents emphasised what could broadly be called 'aesthetic' or 'environmental' characteristics. Terms such as 'unspoilt', 'clean', 'natural', 'scenic', 'beautiful' were widely used, as were 'no pollution', 'lack of traffic'. Examples include:

"Somewhere you can experience nature..."

"Wildlife in its natural habitat..."

"An area... possibly assisted by environmental agencies – National Heritage, SSSIs..."

"Unspoilt wilderness..."

"Unspoilt, unpolluted natural beauty... unspoilt biodiversity"

The main environmental emphases were on the absence of anthropogenic pollution and the scenic quality of the landscape. There were also numerous references to 'wilderness' and 'natural' areas, which is interesting in the light of the contested nature of these terms. 'Unspoilt' is another interesting term to be used so frequently, and seemed to indicate that man is seen as the 'despoiler' of pristine, otherwise natural environments. This ties back strongly into the previous explanatory theme and to the idea of 'Remoteness' as an indicator of environmental quality. In the previous example, the recognisable element that the subjects highlighted was the lack of human presence of development. In this category, respondents stressed the presence of 'natural' habitats' and 'wildlife' as the recognisable indicator of a 'high quality environment'. The picture provided by these two categories of response is somewhat complementary: when identifying 'high quality' in a rural environment it appears that the evaluative judgement has two important criteria. Firstly, there must be few, if any, obvious signs of human 'intrusion', and secondly, the area must have the appearance of a 'natural landscape'. Both these ideas, and particularly the latter of these are discussed in more detail below.

Functional Values Somewhat paradoxically, considering the 'undeveloped' and 'natural' focus of the previous two explanatory themes, many respondents also identified *functional* aspects of 'high quality natural / rural environments'. Many of these specified recreational activities seen to be located firmly within the environment in question.

"lots of walks and activities..."

"you can find peace and quiet but with some basic amenities"

"opportunities for outdoor sport / recreation..."

"nice to look at – good scenery..."

"scenic – can go walking..."

This aspect of the social understanding of environmental quality ties in neatly with the more general definition of quality given in chapter 3: the ability of a product or service to meet the user's needs, and evaluated on this basis. As such, respondents evaluated the quality of the environment in terms of the use they make of it – from general relaxation, to viewing beautiful scenery, to active recreation. The environment that they 'use' in order to participate in their chosen form of activity is judged on its ability to provide them with what they require – from scenery to services.

To summarise then, there appear to be three main categories of response in relation to public perceptions of environmental quality in rural locations. The first two of these, an absence of physical human development and a 'natural' appearance, are in line with widely recognised social constructions of environmental quality as discussed in chapter 3 and 4. The third category is more problematic, and theoretically interesting in that it presents a paradoxical situation. While the former categories focused on indicators of environmental quality that highlight a lack of human presence and 'natural' environments, the latter category focuses directly on human use of the self-same environment. This paradox illustrates well the complexity of people's relationship with the 'natural' environment. On one hand, 'naturalness' and 'remoteness' are valued – yet so is the ability of the environment to provide opportunities for recreation and enjoyment. The commercial provision of opportunities to experience the 'natural' environment, and the businesses required to service the needs of those who do, would seem to mitigate against the importance of the former two criteria, yet many responses included all three.

6.2.2 Apparent Naturalness in Social Constructions of Environmental Quality

Whether the environment is in fact as 'natural' as it appears was an interesting theme of the responses. This classic paradox emerged when one respondent described a 'high quality rural or 'natural' environment' as being "*...a natural habitat... not man-made... definitely natural*", then identified "*the Birks of Aberfeldy*" as being a place which fitted her description. Immediately, she laughed out loud because she knew she had directly contradicted herself to me. The place she identified, despite its scenic broadleaf woodlands, picturesque river and overall 'natural'

appearance, is in fact a highly managed environment. It is part of a commercial estate that includes numerous man-made woodland walks and trails, areas of tree planting and other managed aspects. If 'natural' is taken to mean 'untouched by man' (as the above respondent intended it), then this area is no more 'natural' than a carefully landscaped garden, on a large scale. Indeed, large-scale landscaping and forestry projects have long been the norm on the Perthshire estates which comprised the study are for this current research project. The 4th Duke of Atholl (known as the 'Planting Duke') reputedly used a cannon to ensure that larch seedlings reached the highest, most inaccessible parts of his estate at Blair Atholl, located right in the heart of Highland Perthshire. The aesthetic beauty of the landscape created by the Duke, his contemporaries and their successors cannot be disputed, but to describe the woodlands of Highland Perthshire as 'natural' is to perpetrate an extremely powerful 'environmental myth'.

This particular respondent showed a high level of awareness of the land use history of her selected 'environment', which was not widespread among other respondents. Yet it is likely that the idea of 'apparent naturalness' is influential among respondents. Although not all respondents speak in such extreme terms as the 'wilderness advocates' there seems to be a common element in that they value highly the 'apparent naturalness' of the 'environment' to which they ascribe a 'high value'. As Cronon (1995) points out, the influence of wilderness values is pervasive: it influences what we value in environments that are not necessarily 'wilderness area'. We associate the condition of 'wilderness' with 'high quality' and we look for indicators of 'wilderness' when we go into an environment. 'Naturalness' is a highly influential component of the 'wilderness concept', and people respond to 'natural seeming' places in the same way – by valuing them.

6.2.3 Where are high quality rural or 'natural' environments found?

To allow respondents to expand on their answers above, they were asked the following:

"Name a place you know of which fits this description. Why have you chosen this place?"

The range of places named was, perhaps not surprisingly, largely limited to places and regions located within Scotland, specifically the Highlands and Islands areas and Highland Perthshire. Of 75 responses only 3 identified locations out with these regions (*"south of Kalgoorlie, Australia"*, *"Germany – a very clean place!"* and "*North Yorkshire Moors National Park*"). The apparent over-representation of northern Scottish sites might indicate a particularly patriotic sample population but

is more likely to be a result of the study area being located within Highland Perthshire, which is known as the 'Gateway to the Highlands'. In terms of the research, such an occurrence was not seen to be problematic. The in-depth-interviewing techniques and the 'open' nature of the survey questionnaire meant that the reasons behind certain location choices could be explored, and the responses categorised and analysed in more detail.

60% of respondents mentioned locations in the Highlands and Islands, which included these examples:

"The north-west coast of Scotland"

"The Isle of Skye"

"Highland and Islands of Scotland – especially the Northern Highlands, around Sutherland..."

"Ardnamurchan..."

"Glen Coe, Skye and lots of places in the Highlands and Islands"

"...the Islands especially – Harris and Mull"

"the Rothiemurchus Estate..."

"Torridon"

These locations can be said to share certain characteristics. They are renowned for their scenic and wildlife values, as any Scottish Tourist Board guide to the area will demonstrate, and they are relatively under-populated and undeveloped. As such, the respondents who mentioned them referred them to them very strongly in these terms. The responses focused on the *"absolutely beautiful"* scenery and landscape, the lack of human presence (*"very empty...few people living there"*), the perceived remoteness of the places themselves (*"remote and wild", "remote... and challenging")* and the presence of native / natural wildlife (*"diversity of the wildlife", "natural landscapes and natural habitat"*).

The other apparent choice of locale was somewhat different from the above examples. 40% respondents specified a location in Highland Perthshire, or that area as a whole. As with the respondents above, an emphasis was placed on the aesthetic and scenic qualities of the locations identified. For example:

"Highland Perthshire area... beautiful countryside..."

"Highland Perthshire...scenic with lots of woodlands..."

"Dunkeld and Birnam... beautiful woodland walks and the river..."

"Birks of Aberfeldy...lovely, special and scenic."

This is perhaps a predictable response. Like the Highlands and Islands region, Highland Perthshire is renowned for the beauty of its scenery and landscapes, being highly thought of by Queen Victoria (such as the famous 'Queens View' view point at Killiecrankie) and the many tourists who have followed the royal example since then. The other main emphasis within the responses of this 'domestic' group was perhaps more prosaic than the references to remoteness and a lack of human presence noted for the previous group. Many respondents referred to aspects of the rural lifestyle rather than characteristics that were inherent to the location, such as remoteness. Many of these respondents seemed to feel that they were in fact living in (or at least near to) a 'high quality rural or 'natural' environment', and the place they were describing was their home. For example:

"Perthshire – Bankfoot...community spirit, projects and the WRI (Women's Rural Institute)"

"Dunning...helpful and friendly community, no crime..."

"Glen Lochay... quiet and peace... because I live in Killin which is nearby and often visit Glen Lochay"

"Kinloch Rannoch and Blair Atholl...I was born here and like living here...good community..."

"Crieff...I live there...lovely walks and scenery all year round – though not much else!"

"Glen Lyon...I live close by... and often at the weekends run and walk in Glen Lyon"

6.2.4 Finding value in Rural Environments

It appears then that responses to the question of location fall into two distinct groups. These have been labelled as being 'Remote' and 'Domestic', a reflection of the criteria identified by respondents in each group.

'Remoteness' as an indicator of High Environmental Quality

These respondents identified areas that were some distance from where they lived and which are nationally lauded for their obvious qualities of scenery, remoteness and a 'wild' and unspoilt nature. Links between the elements of the descriptions of this group and certain social constructions of the environment discussed previously can be drawn. In the responses of the 'remote' group, a strong element of 'wilderness values' can be identified in the descriptions. There is a strong focus on the

apparent 'wildness' and 'naturalness' of the landscape and its remoteness from centres of human activity: all elements of the 'wilderness concept'. This widespread perception of the Highlands and Islands, as the "Last Wilderness in Europe" (Scottish Tourist Board 1998: 36) dominates popular understandings of the region. As pointed out previously by Hunter (1995), this representation of the Highlands and Islands region is in many ways a highly inappropriate one – the remote and empty nature of the glens and moorlands does not result from the 'natural' or 'wild' condition of the landscape. Rather, the Highland Clearances and subsequent decades of rural de-population have emptied the land of people. Their buildings have fallen into dereliction and disappeared. Furthermore, the current land ownership and management regime conspire to keep the landscape empty of people, and maintain the impression of 'wilderness areas' in the North. Yet, despite the comprehensive deconstruction of the 'Highland Wilderness' by Hunter and many others, this image of the Highlands and Islands as a 'wilderness' persists. The papers presented at the 1983 Wilderness Society Conference, held at Findhorn, Morayshire, highlight this paradox well. Despite numerous papers which pointed out, often in their opening paragraphs, that there is no 'true wilderness' in Scotland, several other papers – often by renowned conservationists – persisted in referring to areas such as the Cairngorms and surrounding glens as 'wilderness' and arguing that the ethics of wilderness conservation need to be applied for their protection. It appears that neither professional scientists nor the public are willing to lay this concept aside. It may be that the 'wilderness concept' is just too attractive, too 'sexy' in conservation terms to abandon. From the point of view of scientists – ecologists and conservationists in particular – the contested value-laden nature of terms (or myths) such as 'natural' and 'wilderness' make them valuable tools in the ongoing battle to 'protect' such areas from development. As groups such as Earth First! and Greenpeace understand well, images and symbols can be manipulated in order to gain public sympathy and support for their causes.

Leaving aside the niceties of 'wilderness ethics', in terms of this research identifying the existence of the 'wilderness concept' in the responses is important. It demonstrates that these respondents have identified a source of value in the 'environment'. It appears that 'wilderness areas' are highly valued by the respondents. They are seen as epitomising "high quality natural environments". So here we have a potential source of value, which could feasibly be recognised and exploited by an entrepreneur. Indeed, the Highlands and Islands tourist industry relies very heavily on the commodification and marketing of the area as a wild, remote place.

Domestic Values in the Living the Rural Lifestyle

The second group of respondents focused on quite different aspects of the environment in their responses. 'Remoteness' and 'wilderness' were far less important to this group. They liked to feel they were living in a 'natural environment' of sorts, but for them 'nature' does not take the form of 'wilderness'. Rather 'nature' is part of their surroundings, providing an important part of the backdrop to their everyday lives. Of the two 'environmental myths' (Rennie-Short 1991) described previously ('environment as wilderness' and 'environment as countryside') they identify most strongly with the latter. To them, the 'rural lifestyle' is of primary importance, and they judge 'their' rural environment by its ability to support or provide them with this lifestyle. This perception relates to what might be seen as 'non-environmental' issues such as rural communities, safety, cheap housing, local facilities and an all-round 'good place to bring up the children'. Thus, these individuals emphasised these aspects of 'quality' in their responses. In some ways they demonstrated a far broader understanding of the word 'environment', which encompasses all aspects of their (rural) lives, and not just obviously 'environmental' issues like nature conservation or wild scenery. A good illustration of the ideals that inform the perceptions of this group is the Perthshire 'Quality of Life' Trust, which is very active in rural Perthshire. Its stated aim is to maintain the high 'quality of life' which residents in Perthshire enjoy. The 'rural idyll' comprises many different elements, as discussed by Newby (1979), Rennie-Short (1991) and others. Potentially, each one of these elements could provide a source of value in the rural environment. The value sources will be explored in more detail below, in connection with the 'use value' of high quality environments, and also in subsequent chapters relating to the exploitation of these value sources by rural entrepreneurs.

One particularly important facet of this is the strong 'anti-industrial' connotation found in the construction of the rural idyll. As will be outlined below 'development' is seen as the general 'bogeyman' which threatens the quality of many rural environments. This antipathy towards 'development' is a theme that links virtually all respondents, in both the 'Remote' and 'Domestic' groups. 'Development' is perceived as a threat to the integrity of scenic landscapes, the wildlife and habitats that exist in remote areas, as well as the quality of life available in more accessible rural areas. Thus, while the form of the development may vary, the reaction towards it among the respondents does not.

6.3 Linking Use and Environmental Value

Previously, 'Functional Aspects' of the environment were identified as one of the ways in which people evaluated the quality of the environment. Specifically, this referred to the use that certain respondents made of this specific environment. The quotes given above refer to various uses, ranging from formal recreational activities to casual appreciation of scenic landscapes. During data collection and analysis, this theme was explored further, and specifically asked respondents about their own use of the environments that they identified as being of high quality. Thus, the aim was to investigate how 'high quality 'natural' and rural environments are actually used by the respondents, and the criteria by which they judge how satisfactory their use is.

Respondents were asked to answer the question, *"Describe your use of 'high quality 'natural' or rural environments."* This was one of the few closed questions in the survey – perhaps a less than ideal format in retrospect. It was used simply because early rounds of questioning demonstrated that respondent's use of the environment was varied, but appeared to fall into certain categories, and the aim was to investigate these categories in more depth. An open-ended response of 'Other' was included to allow the inclusion of respondents whose use did not fall into these categories.

The preliminary categories of use used in the questionnaire were as follows;

- Leisure / Informal Recreation
- Wildlife Appreciation / Bird-Watching
- As a Tourist / Visitor
- Place where you make a living
- Place where you live
- Other (to be specified)

These categories obviously overlap – bird watching, for example, could easily be viewed as a leisure activity. Furthermore, one respondent could potentially respond positively to more than one category of use – someone who lives in a rural environment may well participate in recreational activities in their own area, and they may also visit other rural or 'natural' areas as a tourist. So there was a lot of potential for overlap, which is no doubt a reflection of the multi-functional nature of rural areas. In retrospect it would perhaps have been more useful to leave this as a completely open question, allowing respondents to talk about their use of 'high quality rural or 'natural' environments', and then categorising the responses. However, in practice, respondents were encouraged by the informal nature of the interviews to expand on their uses of the environment in

question, which provided some useful data that went beyond a simple 'tick in a box' answer. Furthermore, the questioning was tied closely to the actual *place* that respondents had named in response to Question 2 above, so respondents' attention was focused closely on that place and their use of it.

6.3.1 Categories of use of high quality environments

The five categories of use that emerged from the responses have been identified as *Rural Community / Lifestyle, Recreational Activities, Tourism / Visitor, Business Opportunities, Nature Appreciation / Wildlife*. These categories evolved from the respondents' answers to the above question, a combination of a specified use and additional comments on this. Highlighting once again the multiple functions of rural areas, many respondents fitted into more than one category. Tables 6.1 to 6.5 detail some of the actual answers given by respondents, alongside their use of high quality environments. In each of these tables the first column ('Reponses') outlines the criteria or specific features that respondents highlighted as being indicators of high quality in their 'natural' or rural environment. The second column identifies the specific use each respondent makes of the environment in question. The aim of the analysis is to generate a theoretical explanation to link Response and Use.

Rural Lifestyle One of the first themes to emerge, mentioned by some 47% of respondents, was an element of use that related to leading what was widely described as a 'rural lifestyle'. Certain aspects of rural living have been discussed previously as these responses frequently fall into line with the responses of those who selected 'domestic' locations (Highland Perthshire) as the epitome of a 'high quality' environment. The descriptive / evaluative criteria mentioned by the respondents included the following:

> *"no litter, no pollution"*
>
> *"accessible, with good quality, low density housing"*
>
> *"helpful and friendly community, no crime, not to many buildings..."*
>
> *"an attractive place to live and work, with choices available for both"*

Such responses fall into the perception of the country as a 'rural idyll' with its emphasis on the organic nature of the community and the high quality of life available to those living within the community. The anti-urban connotations were strong, reflecting the general 'Town Bad – Country

Good' perception (Blishen 1984). Table 6.1 below presents some of these statements made by respondents alongside their given use of that environment.

Table 6.1 Use of 'High Quality Environments' and 'Rural' Lifestyle

Response	***Specific Use by Respondent***
Use: Rural Lifestyle	
"no litter, no pollution"	A place to live
"accessible, with good quality, low density housing"	A place to live
"lovely walks and scenery all year round. Not much else to do [in Crieff]– golfing, the swimming pool…"	A place to live [Crieff]
"somewhere without tourists or too many buildings or factories … wilderness areas"	A place to live [Tentsmuir Forest]
"Helpful and friendly community, no crime, not too many buildings"	A place to live [Dunning]
"An attractive place to live and work with choices available for both"	A place to live [Perthshire]
"plenty to do in the community, lots of activities … community spirit"	A place to live [Perthshire]

Recreational Opportunities Many respondents (76%) made use of the environment for recreational activities, both informal activities (e.g. hill walking, climbing) and formal (4WD, mountain biking). While some respondents lived in rural areas, others were incomers who visited rural areas either specifically to participate in recreational activities. These respondents appear to evaluate the environment quite directly in terms of the use they made of it, in this case their own favoured recreational activity. Table 6.2 presents some of the supporting statements which indicate the various aspects of 'high quality environments' that are valued in terms of the recreational opportunities they provide.

Table 6.2 Use of 'High Quality Environments' and Recreational Opportunities

Response	***Specific Use***
Use: Recreational Opportunities	
"an area of scenic beauty, accessible to the public … providing forest walks, open countryside and much flora and fauna"	Leisure / Informal recreation
"peace and tranquillity i.e. not a lot of people, cars or other machines. Unspoilt landscape including mountains and lakes (lochs), trees etc."	Leisure / Informal Recreation [Running and Walking]
"clean and quiet, natural habitat – not man-made"	Leisure / Informal Recreation [Walking the dog]
"No litter, no pollution, lots of trees and grassy areas … bridle paths"	Active Recreation [Horse-Riding]
"Lots of space, empty spaces with good scenery… undeveloped"	Active Recreation [Mountain Biker]
"Lots of climbing! With good scenery, unspoilt landscape"	Active Recreation [Climber]
"Good scenery, walks which you can get to but which are challenging – where you are not walking on roads"	Active Recreation [Keen hill-walker and outdoor sports enthusiast]

Tourism / Visitor This category of use was quite well represented among respondents with a total of 33% mentioning this use of high quality environments. In fact, had the survey been carried out solely in a large urban centre, there may well have been an even higher percentage of people responding positively in this group. The rural has been viewed and used as a 'refuge from modernity' for many years. Despite its rural roots, Scotland – like the UK as a whole – is now an overwhelmingly urban country. The vast majority of its inhabitants live in cities and towns (80%), only visiting the countryside as tourists. In chapter 4, it was pointed out that the rural economy in many areas is wholly dependent on the spending power of visitors to the area. The importance of the tourism sector is such that it underpins the economy – as was demonstrated during the recent foot and mouth crisis. Because this sector is so important to the successful establishment of SMEs in rural areas, it will be examined in more detail in the next chapter

Obviously, this category is closely linked with that of 'Recreational Opportunities' – when people visit the countryside it is often to participate in some form of activity. It was often difficult to separate responses in these two categories. However, there were some responses that indicated that visiting a 'high quality rural or 'natural' environment' could be seen as a use in itself – and that the quality of environment in question was evaluated on this basis as opposed to its suitability for a particular recreational activity. Much of rural Scotland is renowned for the quality of its scenery, and this has been identified as the one of the main attractions to visitors. It is not surprising then that 'scenery' featured heavily in the responses. The responses seemed to highlight two main criteria that this group of respondents identified as being representative of a 'high quality environment'. The first was that there was something that attracted people to visit an area – scenery or 'heritage' or a 'rural place', and secondly, the facilities that were available to them when they visited that place. The responses in table 6.3 highlight these two aspects.

Table 6.3 Use of 'High Quality Environments' and Tourism

Response	***Specific Use***
Use: Tourism	
"places of interest and amenities"	Tourism / Visitor Leisure / Informal Recreation
"low density mixed trees / parkland, low density habitation, accessibility to market town"	Tourism / Visitor
"lots of places to go walking – I like woodlands and easy paths"	Tourism / Visitor Leisure / Informal Recreation
"it's the scenery that makes it special – the landscapes are stunning, the mountains and rivers"	Tourism / Visitor

Thus, respondents whose main use of 'high quality environments' is to visit such places focused on the 'attractiveness' of the location, and the facilities and activities available to them in that location. These were the criteria on which they based their perceptions of environmental quality, and they are directly linked to the use they make of the environment they identified as being of 'high quality'.

Nature Conservation / Appreciation 'Nature conservation / appreciation' was a relatively widely reported use of the environment among the respondents (25%), although fewer people were able to identify an actual direct 'use' that they made of the environment in question. There were two apparent themes in the responses. Firstly, there were those who made a direct use of the wildlife value of their specified 'high quality environment'. Bird watching, for example, is an increasingly popular activity that relies on the presence of certain habitats and species, inevitably found in environments that are perceived to be 'natural'. Similarly, wildlife photography relies on the existence of 'wildlife' to act as a subject. The perceptions of the respondents in this group link closely with those of 'environmental professionals ' such as ecologists and conservationists. They use the same language, for example, referring to 'biodiversity' and 'native species'. As a form of land use, conservation has expanded hugely in recent years with the purchase of large tracts of 'valued' land by conservation groups such as the John Muir Trust (seven properties in Scotland) and the National Trust for Scotland (180,000 acres). Such reserves give people the opportunity to 'use' the wildlife values of such environments, enjoying a visit and hopefully seeing 'nature in action'.

There is another way in which respondents appeared to value this aspect of 'high quality environments', in a more indirect way. When examining environmental values, scholars have observed that people often value plant and animal species that they have never seen and are not likely to ever see in their lifetime. Yet they value the 'existence' of these species – to the extent that they will support wildlife protection groups, such as World Wide Fund for Nature, who seek to protect these favoured, valued, species. Many of the species that are 'protected' in the study area are considered very 'sexy' in conservation terms – they are totemic symbols of 'Scottishness', from golden eagles to red squirrels to capercaillie. It is not possible to ascertain from this survey whether the respondents are referring to these somewhat remote 'existence' values, or to their own recreational activities which involve a direct 'wildlife experience' (bird-watching, for example). The

responses show that there is certainly an element of generalised 'wildlife value' in the construction of 'high quality rural or 'natural' environments' for these respondents. Perhaps nature conservation cannot truly be thought of as a direct 'use' in the same way as a recreational activity can be from the point of view of the respondents themselves, but neither can it be ignored because the respondents value it and often derive some personal satisfaction from it. This idea is highlighted in the statements presented in table 6.4 below, which make clear the extent to which the respondents value the 'apparent naturalness' and the ecological 'value' of certain 'high quality' environments.

Table 6.4 Use of 'High Quality Environments' and Nature Conservation / Wildlife Appreciation

Response	***Specific Use***
Use: Nature Conservation / Wildlife Appreciation	
"somewhere you can see nature"	Wildlife appreciation / Bird-watching
"unspoilt wilderness or managed areas which are handled sensitively"	Wildlife appreciation / conservation
"where people and nature live in harmony. Natural beauty. Wildlife in it's natural habitat – undisturbed … where the locals value and care for their environment"	Wildlife appreciation / conservation
"unpolluted, unspoilt natural beauty … complete with its unspoilt biodiversity"	Wildlife photography

Business Opportunities This final category emerged for respondents whose selected 'high quality environment' was also the place where their business was located, whatever form that business might take. Farming is an obvious example – though the number of farmers contacted during the interviewing sessions was very limited. The following quotes demonstrate how some business operators evaluated environmental quality. It is interesting to note that they identified the actual places where their businesses were located as 'high quality rural or 'natural' environments'. Despite the widely held perception that development inevitably reduces the quality of the environment, it appears that some respondents (namely business owners living in an area they identified as being of high quality) did not hold strongly to the anti-development perception of environmental quality expressed so strongly by other respondents. This complementary perception can be seen to provide an explanatory theme which will be explored further in chapter 7, which focuses on the 'use value' of rural entrepreneurs in relation to the quality of the environment in which their business is located. Some examples, however, can serve to illustrate the perceptions of this small group, and they are presented in table 6.5 below.

The respondents in this group seemed to evaluate environmental quality in terms of the opportunities it presented for them to develop and operate their businesses. This group of respondents was small (6%) perhaps because the sample did not include many business owners or managers.

Table 6.5 Use of 'High Quality Environments' and Business Opportunities

Response	***Specific Use***
Use: Business Opportunities	
"good scenery to attract tourists and visitors"	A place to live, and to do business (Garage sales)
"traditional countryside – farming and wildlife together"	A place to live and make a living (farmer)
"the scenery attracts tourists, and it can provide opportunities for businesses like this one"	A place to live and make a living (Coffee shop owner)

6.3.2 Bad Influences: testing the emergent themes

As outlined in chapter 5, one way of testing the validity of explanatory themes that emerge during the analysis of qualitative data is to ask 'negative' questions. The emergent theory, that respondents were evaluating the quality of the rural' or 'natural' environment on the basis of the use they made of that environment, was tested by asking respondents:

"Can you think of any changes or events that would spoil or reduce the quality of the rural or 'natural' environment for you?"

The vast majority of responses seemed to support the explanatory theme outlined previously, that of 'use value'. The 'changes or events' that were identified by respondents were ones that would potentially have a direct impact on the ability of the 'environment' to meet their needs – whatever those needs might be. The form of the perceived threat might vary, as is demonstrated in the tables below, but each respondent couched their response in terms of how such 'changes' might affect the ability of the environment to serve their particular needs and uses. This is really the crux of the argument presented here: evaluations of environmental quality are inherently subjective, and are tied up in the different uses that people make of 'environments'. When asked to describe a 'low-quality' environment, as a way of testing the previous analysis, the responses invariably revealed a pre-occupation with how such environments would not be able to satisfy the needs of the respondents – and thus be dismissed as being of low 'quality'.

Using the categories outlined previously, some examples can be presented to demonstrate this concept. In fact, the responses to this line of questioning were – if anything – even more revealing than those given previously. They reveal some of the respondent's deeper prejudices and their detailed perceptions of what a 'good' environment is – by stating clearly what it is not.

Rural Lifestyles As above, this category includes respondents whose primary 'use' of the rural environment is as a 'place to live'. The responses shown below demonstrate the variety in the perceptions of these respondents in terms of environmental quality, specifically 'low quality'.

Table 6.6 Use of 'Low Quality Environments' and 'Rural' Lifestyle

Response	***Specific Use***
Use: Rural Lifestyle / Rural Communities	
"People putting chewing gum on the pavements...too much litter from takeaways."	A place to live.
"Incomers trying to alter the culture and undermine the heritage and values"	A place to live
"I would probably have objected to the quarry [near Blair Atholl] if it was new, but because it's been there so long it is accepted"	A place to live
"Landowners restricting access to the mountains. Too many people attracted to the area for recreation purposes e.g. World Outdoor Camps etc."	A place to live
"For example, present planning application for a Tesco site in Pitlochry – such developments are insensitive to local needs."	A place to live
"Building – council housing, renting to unemployed and uneducated people – the wrong people..."	A place to live
"Wider roads, over-use, building, change of use from agriculture, prevention of low-level shooting / fishing"	A place to live
"Reduction of green space – increased housing and industrial land use"	A place to live

The responses reveal a wide variation, referring to many different aspects of life in rural areas, and the way in which the respondents fear this lifestyle could be compromised. These vary from general issues such as litter dropping, to social issues such as the construction of council housing in the countryside and wider issues of access to the countryside for recreational purposes. The classic paradox of rural exclusivity was widely demonstrated by many of these respondents. For example, the same respondent who said that '*too many people attracted to the area for recreation purposes'* would lower the quality of the environment in her opinion, freely admitted that she enjoys living in the countryside because she can run and cycle there. The one theme which links all the responses is that of compromised 'use' value: all these respondents perceive environmental value in terms of the countryside providing a good 'lifestyle' (what ever this means to the individual) and anything which might compromise the ability of the area to serve its purpose is seen as a negative change.

Recreational Opportunities Again, there was a certain amount of variation in the responses given in this category, ranging from the bogeyman of 'Development' to more nebulous fears of certain places being 'overrun' by 'other' people. As recreational opportunities vary in their requirements of an environment, so to do the details of the threats perceived by the respondents vary. An example is that of a keen rider who was interviewed. All her responses concerning the quality of the environment related, in one way or the other, to her own ability to use that environment as a place to go riding. Thus, a negative event, in environmental terms, for this respondent was inappropriate use of the facilities provided for riders. Interestingly, she described the creation of bridle paths as being for the "*protection of the environment*". Not many ecologists would necessarily suggest that the construction of such facilities as being a positive way to protect the environment. However, this respondent, like many others, perceived environmental quality in terms of its ability to satisfy her requirements as a user – and her perception of 'environmental protection' is tied into this personal, subjective view as well. Despite the variation in response, the underlying theme remains the same: the use value of an environment is what determines its value to the respondent, and in turn their evaluation of the quality of this environment hinges on its ability to provide the requirements of their specific use. Table 6.7 below outlines this and other responses that fall into this category.

Table 6.7 Use of 'Low Quality Environments' and Recreational Opportunities

Response	***Specific Use***
Use: Recreational Opportunities	
"Big developments – large groups of people – such as the CairnGorm Railway is likely to bring"	Active Hill-Walker
"Abuse by visitors who do not appreciate or acknowledge the countryside code…property developing…use of land for commercial pursuits e.g. shooting, driving"	Leisure / Informal recreation
"Heavy industry…Pollution…Building incongruous structures or houses."	Leisure / Informal recreation
"Too many people…Limits to access by landowners or by nature conservation agencies"	Active Mountain Biker
"People riding motor bikes on bridle paths – ignoring rules for protection of the environment"	Active Horse Owner / Rider
"Turning areas into National Parks… kind of puts them on the "tourist trail""	Leisure / Informal Recreation
"If it was made into a commercial centre or promoted to tourists…"	Leisure / Informal Recreation

Tourism As above, the criteria by which an environment is judged as serving the needs of tourists are varied. People visit certain locations for a range of different reasons: as such, their perceptions of what denotes a 'high quality environment' vary. The responses given in table 6.4

above outline this variation. Table 6.8 below outlines some of the respondent's perceptions of what would reduce the quality of an environment. They reveal what the respondents value in 'high quality environments' – specifically the ones they would choose to visit for enjoyment.

Table 6.8 Use of 'Low Quality Environments' and Tourism

Response	***Specific Use***
Use: Tourism	
"Large gatherings of people – pop concerts for example"	Place to visit for leisure and informal recreation
"Industrial growth and increased traffic"	Place to visit for leisure and informal recreation
"Factories and big business"	Place to visit for leisure and informal recreation

The responses focus on two main themes, both of which have been repeatedly highlighted in this analysis so far, specifically human presence and physical development. Large groups of people, or noisy polluted conditions are emphatically not what visitors to the countryside expect to find. In many ways these responses represent those of many visitors to rural areas: generally people leave urban areas in order to escape what they perceive as a less pleasant environment. Once again, however, the responses demonstrate that the respondents are evaluating environmental quality in terms of its ability to serve their own purposes – that of providing a satisfactory place to visit, whatever each individual may expect of that visit.

Nature Conservation / Wildlife Appreciation For respondents who identified these activities as their 'use' of the environment, perceived threats clustered around any changes which would reduce the perceived ecological value of the area in question. Most respondents did not go into detail about the actual way in which environmental quality might be compromised, as is shown by the brevity of the responses given in table 6.9 below. This could be because they felt it was too 'obvious', given widespread concern about 'The Environment'. Alternatively, if this question had been put to a group of people who were particularly knowledgeable about wildlife conservation – say countryside Rangers – it is likely that the responses might have been far more numerous and detailed. The widespread nature of public concern about 'The State of The Environment' has been discussed in chapter 3, as has the spread of environmental education initiatives. Many members of the public now have a certain level of awareness about the need to 'conserve native species' or 'preserve biodiversity', but they do not have the specialist knowledge common to many 'environmental professionals'. Thus, the brevity and vagueness of the responses might reveal that

these particular respondents have a certain level of 'environmental awareness' as a result of the contemporary environmental movement, but they are not 'experts'. They want to know that the 'high quality environment' they value for its wildlife and biodiversity is being protected, but they lack the scientific knowledge to say how this should be done, or what the real threats to wildlife and biodiversity are. This doesn't mean that this 'use' of 'high quality environments' is any less valid than the others, but it is somewhat harder to define and theorise.

Table 6.9 Use of 'Low Quality Environments' and Nature Conservation / Wildlife Appreciation

Response	***Specific Use***
Use: Nature Conservation / Wildlife Appreciation	
"Endangering or harming wildlife"	Wildlife / Bird – Watching
"Development of more formal recreation facilities...Excessive ease of access"	Wildlife / Bird – Watching

Business Opportunities As above, this category of response was limited to a few respondents, yet proves very illuminating as it demonstrates the breadth of response from different individuals. Again, the respondents revealed that 'use value' shaped their evaluations of environmental quality. In the two examples presented in table 6.10 below, each respondent did exactly this. One respondent, a farmer, identified 'wrong' land use policies as an indicator of a 'low quality environment'. This is an issue that could potentially directly impact on his ability to make a living in the countryside, that of large areas being designated as National Park. Thus, from his perspective at least, the use value of the land would be reduced. The second respondent, who owned a small shop in a rural town, said that the construction of a supermarket locally would reduce the overall quality of the local environment. It may well be that the respondent was genuinely concerned for the preservation of local architectural character: alternatively, the idea of competition and possible closure of his own business may well have been the motivating factor behind his comment. In each case, the use value of the environment to the respondent is based on their ability to successfully operate their respective businesses.

Table 6.10 Use of 'Low Quality Environments' and Business Opportunities

Response	***Specific Use***
Use: Business Opportunities	
"Too many people using land wrongly – like National Parks in England – too many cars and pollution."	Place to make a living (Farmer)
"Development opportunities would be welcome for the jobs, but they should be unobtrusive – not like the supermarket in Pitlochry."	Place to make a living and to live

6.4 Summary and Conclusions

The aim of this section was to present the results of the data collection and analysis which focused on "Perceptions of environmental quality; what is a 'high quality rural or 'natural' environment'?" The first theme, or perhaps an issue, to emerge from the data was really a methodological issue of how to cope with using contested and value-laden terms such as 'natural' and 'environment' without inadvertently biasing the respondents. On the other hand, to leave these terms out would risk the respondents misunderstanding the focus of the interviews which was on rural and / or 'natural environments'. The outcome was a compromise of language, which allowed the researcher to focus the interviews sufficiently and hopefully avoid directing the responses.

The second theme to emerge was that the 'high quality rural or 'natural' environment about which respondents were questioned appeared to take the form of some sort of *construction* which consisted of several elements. These elements included *a lack of physical development*, *environmental / aesthetic* and *functional* values. The inadequacy of adopting a "uni-dimensional definition" (Halfacree 1995) for 'high quality environments' was demonstrated – all the responses could potentially contain all these elements, and possibly more.

The locational element of the responses was the next theme to be recognised and analysed. When respondents were asked to name a place that fitted into their descriptions, two distinct sets of responses were obtained. The 'remote' group named locations that shared certain common characteristics – scenic beauty, remoteness from human settlement, very low or no human development and others, which can be seen to characterise a Scottish 'wilderness'. The presence of a 'wilderness' value among respondents was noteworthy, as it represents an environmental value that could potentially be exploited. The other group of respondents, the 'domestic' group, named locations within and around the Highland Perthshire area and many respondents named their hometowns or villages. The descriptions of this group were much more in line with the values commonly associated with the 'rural idyll' – organic communities, traditional lifestyles and 'natural', yet accessible, settings, in 'the countryside'.

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the scientific or objective indicators described in chapter 3. These indicators are inherently subjective, rooted in the specific use made of the environment by the user. We have attempted, above, to develop certain categories of use (a place to live, a place to work *etc*) though it is made clear that these categories are not definitive, merely illustrative of the diversity of human experience in relation to the environment. Yet, we have been able to identify certain recognisable characteristics that indicate, for the user, a 'high quality environment'. This is an important first step in this research and will be developed further, as we move on to examine how these indicators or 'signifiers of value' can be exploited through the process of environmental enterprise. As social indicators of environmental quality, they have come to represent a 'cultural shorthand', making it possible for the individual to recognise a 'high quality 'natural' environment' in terms of their own specific needs. Thus, it can be suggested that if these signifiers can be harnessed through the process of enterprise, they can present a range of opportunities to the entrepreneur who is in a position to recognise and exploit them. The remaining sections of this study are devoted to developing an understanding of how this process – that of environmental enterprise – occurs.

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the form of the business they have chosen to operate. Throughout, unusual or unexpected cases are investigated and considered in the light on the ongoing conceptualisation process. This is a way of testing the emergent theories, ensuring that the ideas 'fit' the data, and maintaining the validity of the analysis process. On occasion, where the data appears to conflict with emergent theories, an explanation is offered, derived from the data collected in that particular case.

7.2 The Data

As is the case for all qualitative data gathered through interviews, the data itself varies in both quality and quantity. There are many reasons for this. The 'interview experience' is variable, despite the best efforts of the researcher. Settings vary (though in this case they were all the respondent's place of work / residence) and so do people. Some respondents were simply more 'theoretically interesting' than others. Some had a lot to say, and picked up on the ideas and questions being put to them more quickly than others. This variation is to be expected and is justified by the form of the research process, which directs questioning and data collection towards abstracted categories. It is important, however, to note that a certain level of filtering has happened before the researcher and the respondent meet for the first time. Because the researcher cannot ask the respondent about 'everything' there has to be some form of pre-interview selectivity about the research subjects being investigated. The importance of 'pre-understanding' as developed through an extensive review of the literature and contemporary thought on the research subjects was highlighted previously (chapter 2). This 'pre-understanding' though, does introduce an element of 'subjective filtering' into the collection of even primary data, as is being discussed here. However, this is a necessary part of the research process. Where a scientist might begin with a specific hypothesis to test through his work, social researchers often begin with only a general ''research idea'. In order to develop researchable questions from this vague research area, pre-understanding is developed along with the identification of researchable research questions.

7.3 The Place and the People: data collection area and the respondents

The aim here is to provide an insight into the 'world' inhabited by the respondents: the place that is Highland Perthshire. It also aims to introduce the respondents themselves and provide some information about their businesses. Both statistical information and more subjective descriptions are used to describe the area itself. The latter are given added weight by comments made by the respondents themselves. It is important to examine how the respondents themselves perceive the

quality of the environment in which they are located, because the overall aim is to investigate how these perceptions influence business decisions and actions. Data collected previously and presented in chapter 6 suggests strongly that the area known as 'Highland Perthshire' is widely perceived to represent a 'high quality natural / rural environment'. Rather than assuming that rural entrepreneurs located here share this view, respondents were questioned about their own perceptions of the surrounding environment. In retrospect, it would have been a safe assumption to make because all respondents questioned did perceive the environmental quality of Highland Perthshire as being 'high' or 'very high'. However, it is interesting to examine the details of such perceptions, particularly in the light of the respondents' occupations as small business owners.

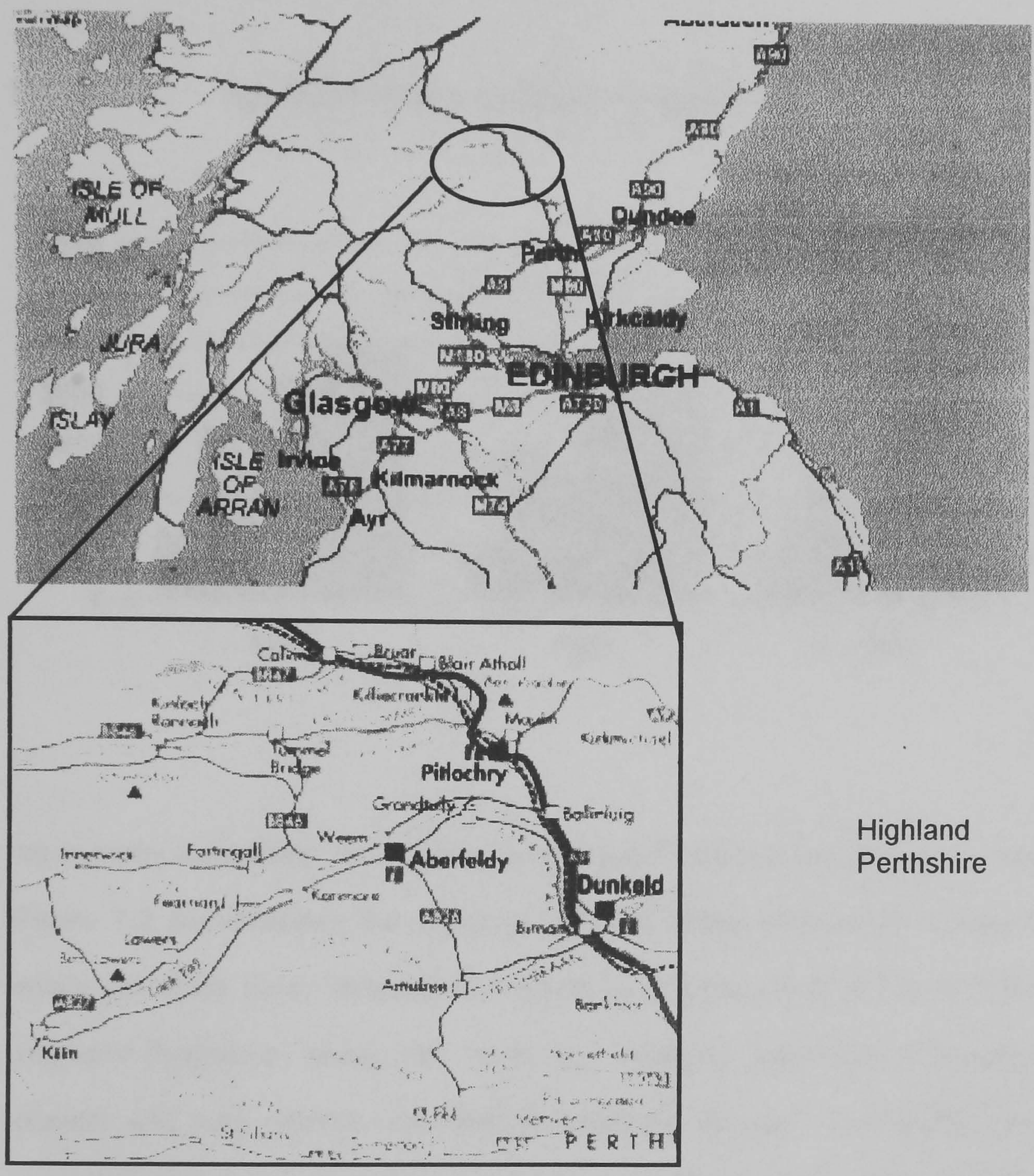
It is important to keep in mind the issues discussed previously, in chapter 6 relating to the inherent subjectivity of making qualitative judgements. This research aims to take a subjective approach to the question of 'what is a high quality natural / rural environment', based on the idea of social constructions of environmental quality. The justification for this, as explained previously, is that research has shown that 'ordinary people' are likely to value 'an environment' in very different ways to 'professionals'. There is a need, in research of this type, to represent the views of the respondents, rather than to accept some 'scientific' definition of 'high quality' in environmental terms. This approach has the definite advantage of being able to collect a much wider sphere of data, and to attempt to develop an understanding of the 'world' of the respondent. On the other hand, it makes analysis and discussion more challenging. When talking about 'high quality environments' below, it must be borne in mind that this actually refers to a whole range of environments that are, essentially socially constructed by the respondents. This approach is complex, and at times makes the 'one definition fits all' approach of ecological science look highly desirable. Nonetheless, it is worthwhile pursuing this alternative approach, which attempts to give a voice to the perceptions and values of the respondents.

7.3.1 The Study Area

Geography and Demographics Perth and Kinross region is located in the approximate centre of Scotland, sharing a northern border with the Highland Region (see Map 7.1). It is a relatively large region, and very varied in physical characteristics, ranging from the low-lying fertile farmland of the Carse of Gowrie, to the major urban centres of Perth and Dundee, and the more mountainous areas in the north. Of the population of 130,000, 70% are considered to be 'rural'

dwellers. As a region, Perth & Kinross has the second fastest growing population in Scotland, with an over-representation of older people (50% of the migrants to the region are over the age of 50: Findlay 1998, unpublished).

Map 7.1 Highland Perthshire: the study area

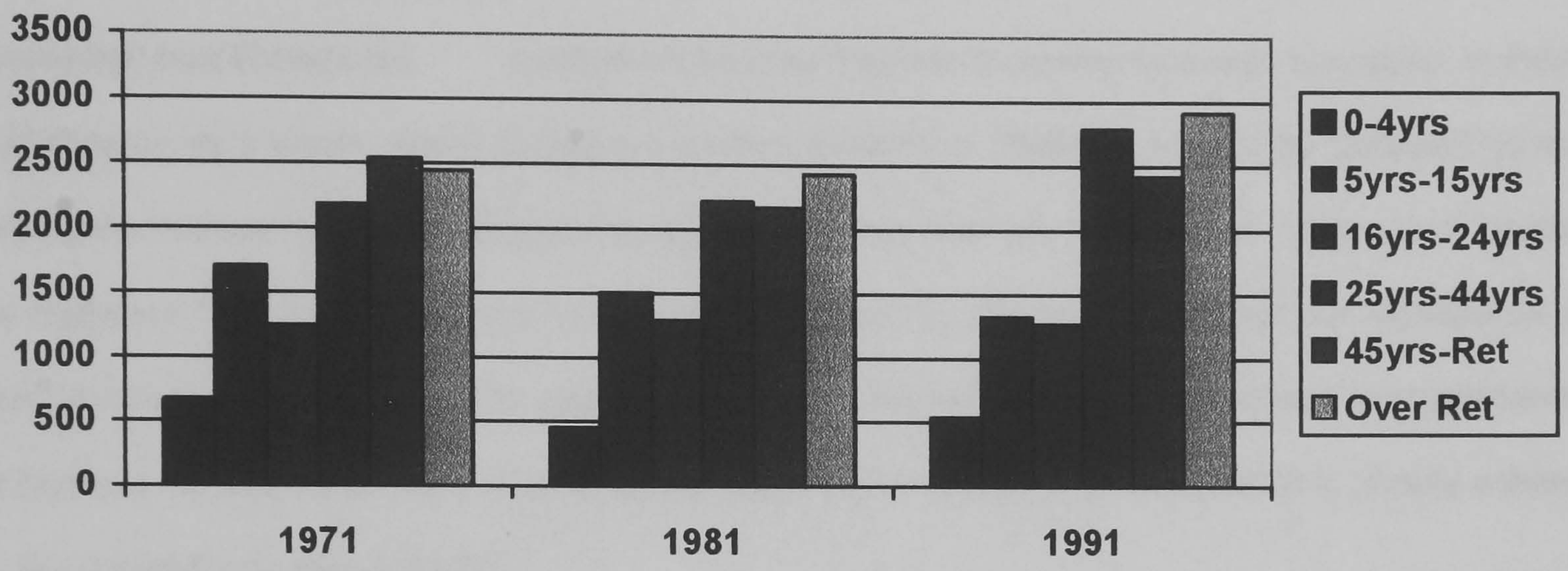


Highland Perthshire

In many ways, and certainly in the minds of many inhabitants, the area has more in common with the Highland Region lying to the north, than with other parts of lowland Perthshire. Indeed, the Scottish Office has previously classified the area as 'less remote rural'. The three towns of Dunkeld, Aberfeldy and Pitlochry are the main centres of population. Outside the towns, small villages struggle against population decline. A study by researchers from Dundee University (Findlay, 1998) which examined migration in the village of Crieff, which lies just to the south of the study area, found that some 23% of long-term households reported at least one out-migrant, the vast majority (93%) being the child of the head of the household. It can be expected that this

situation is, if anything, more severe in the Highland Perthshire area, being more remote from major population centres. Figure 7.1 outlines the age distribution of residents in Highland Perthshire, showing that while the number of older people in the area has increased over time, the number of school-leaving age young people has stayed constant. This skewed age distribution is characteristic of many depopulated rural areas.

Figure 7.1 Age Distribution of Residents in Highland Perthshire

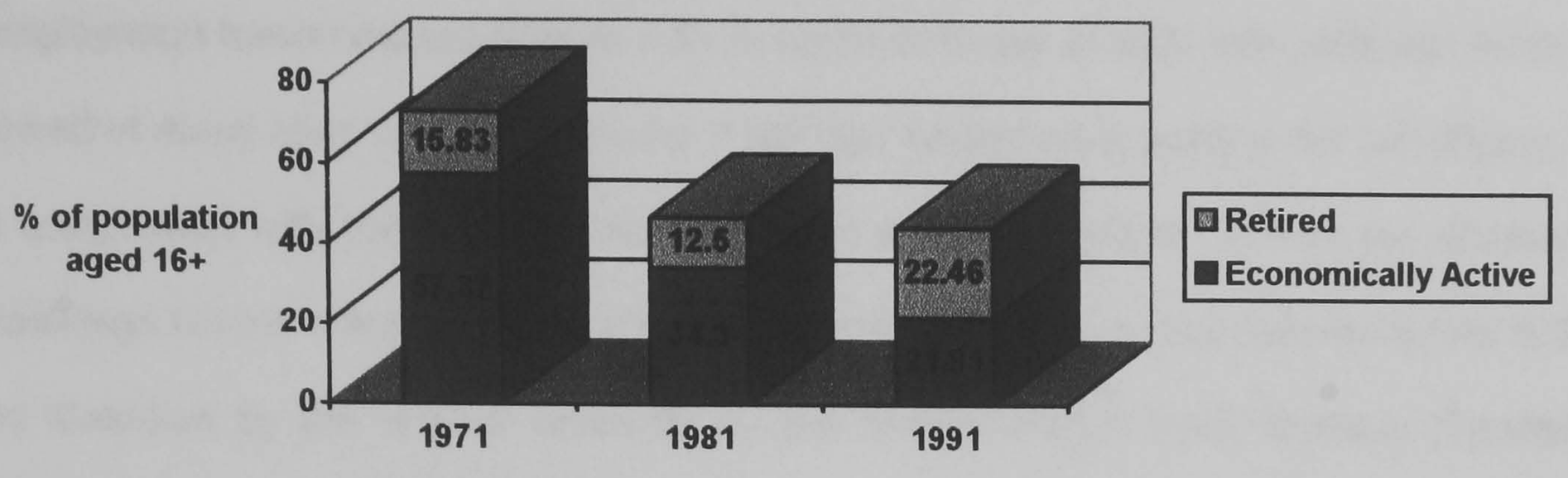


(Census Data 1991)

As in many rural areas, in-migration to Highland Perthshire has become a contentious local issue. Figure 7.2 demonstrates the changing ratios of retired persons to economically active persons within the study area, showing each group as a percentage of the total population aged 16+. Highland Perthshire, being both 'rural' and relatively accessible is proving to be increasingly popular with both retirees and 'lifestyle migrants'. However, in-migration has not been uniform throughout the region, and there are many small villages facing the loss of vital services, through lack of use. In short, demographic changes in the area are characterised by a decline in the number of economically active people (relative to the whole population), with an associated relative increase in the retired population.

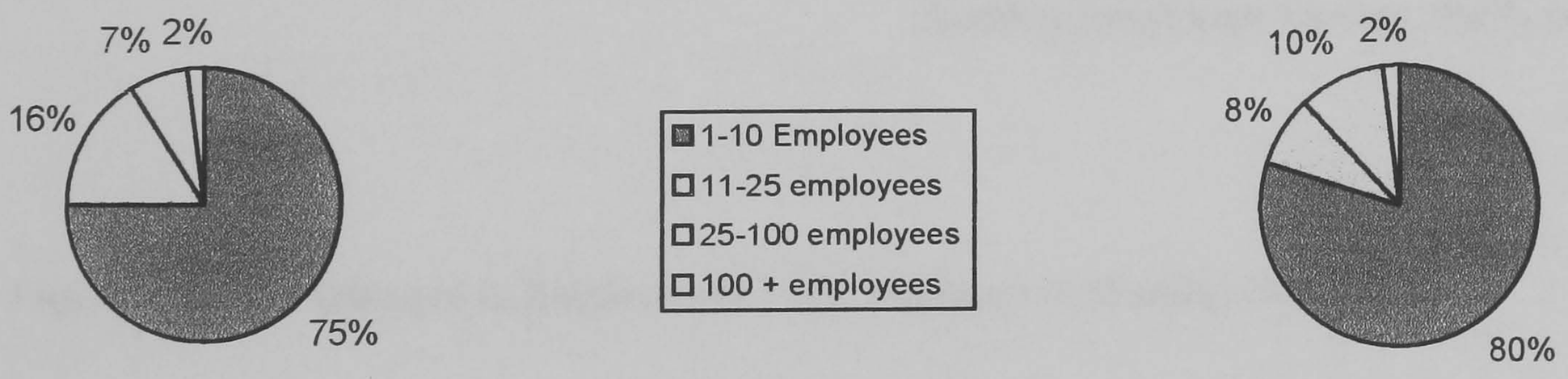
Figure 7.2 Economically active and retired persons living in Highland Perthshire

(Census Data 1991)



Economy and Enterprise Scottish Enterprise Tayside oversees business enterprise in Perth and Kinross as a whole, which includes Highland Perthshire. Statistics tend to be gathered by the enterprise companies at the Regional level, so business start-up and general employment figures for Highland Perthshire alone are quite difficult to come by. Figure 7.3 displays the distribution of businesses in Perth & Kinross by size (number of employees), which demonstrates the dominance of businesses with fewer than 10 employees in the region (75%). This distribution is closely echoed in the respondents group (80%).

Figure 7.3 Distribution of Businesses by size: Perth & Kinross / Respondents Group

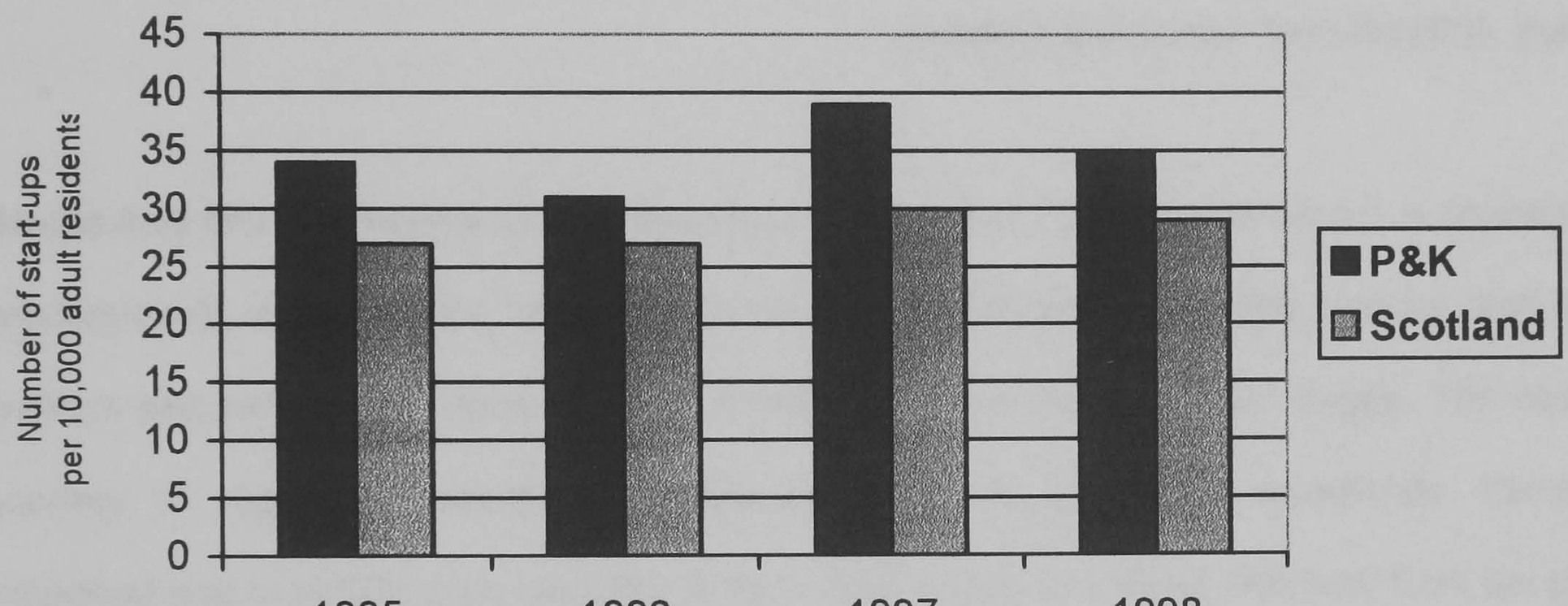


(Census 1991)

Since 1996, the number of new businesses started in Perth and Kinross region has increased from 97 in 1996/97 to 163 in 1999/00. Figure 7.4 demonstrates that the business birth rate in Perth and Kinross as a whole compares favourably with that of Scotland as a whole. Perth & Kinross region is acknowledged to be one of the more prosperous areas of Tayside Region, enjoying near full employment (Tayside Economic Research Centre 2000). However, despite this overall positive outlook, it appears that Highland Perthshire suffers from some of the classic 'rural problems'. Jobs

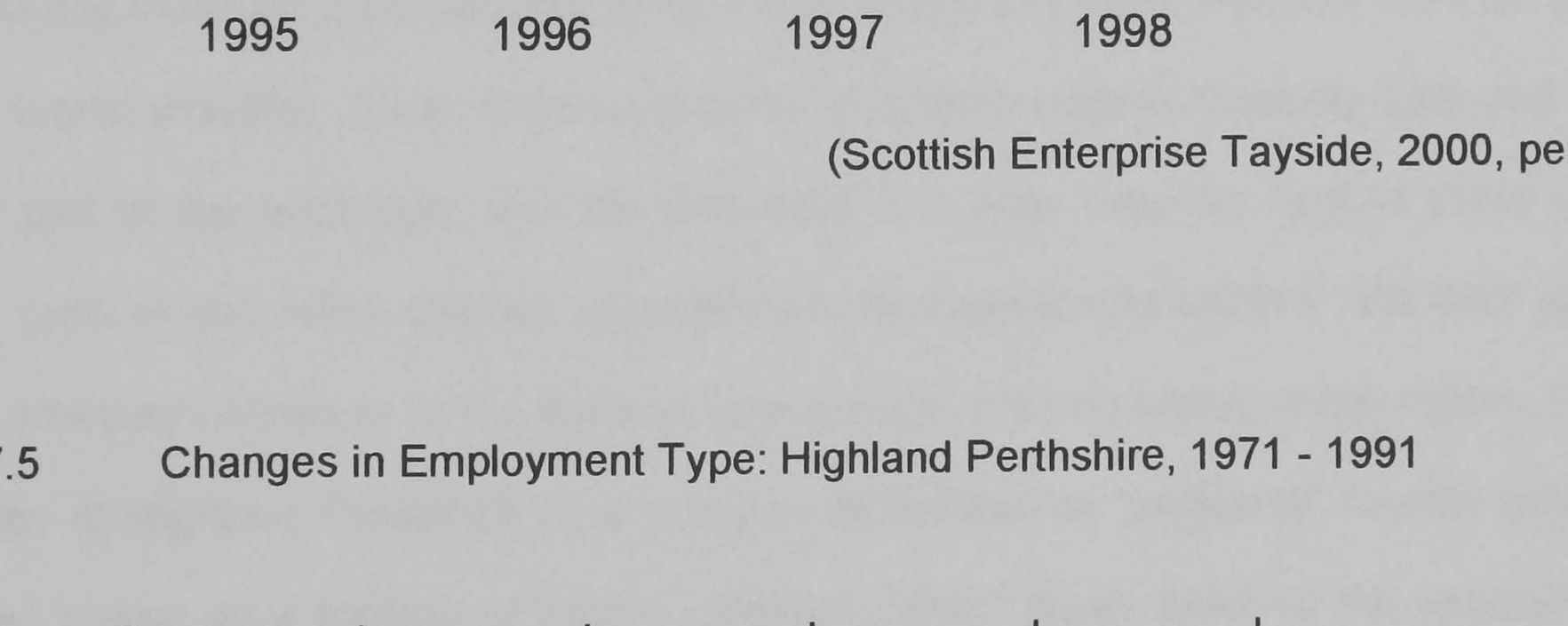
in primary sector industries are declining, and are being replaced (if at all) by jobs in the service industries. Employment data gathered in the censuses of 1971, 1981 and 1991 show that the area has followed a similar pattern to many rural areas: full-time jobs have declined, part-time and self-employment has increased (Figure 7.5). In terms of business birth rate, although Perth & Kinross is ahead of many other parts of Scotland, it still lags behind other parts of the UK (Figure 7.6). Making a comparison with the Scottish rate is perhaps putting a positive spin on the situation – Scotland itself lags behind many countries of similar population size, such as Norway (Levie & Steele 2000), as identified by the original research for the Business Birth Rate Strategy (Scottish Enterprise 1993a).

Figure 7.4 Business Birth Rate: Perth & Kinross / Scotland



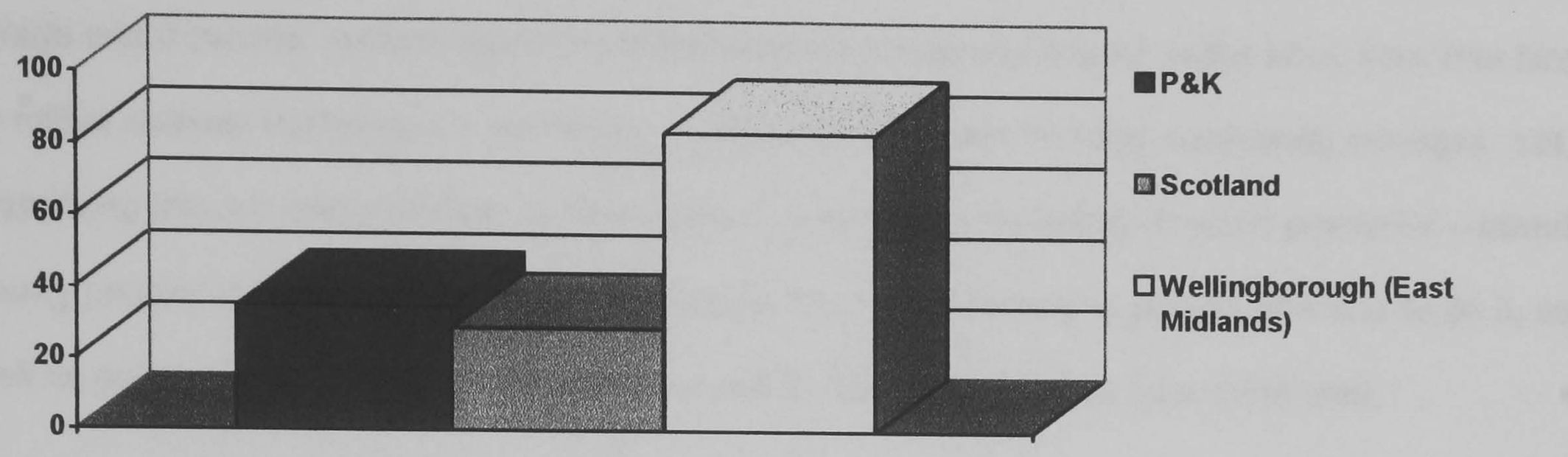
(Scottish Enterprise Tayside, 2000, pers. comm.)

Figure 7.5 Changes in Employment Type: Highland Perthshire, 1971 - 1991



(Scottish Enterprise Tayside 2000, pers. comm.)

Figure 7.6 VAT Business Start-Up in P&K, Scotland and East Midlands



(Scottish Enterprise Tayside 2000, pers. comm.)

Social and Environmental Characteristics Highland Perthshire is varied in character, though predominantly mountainous, including the peaks of Schiehallion and Ben Lawers, both beloved by walkers and naturalists. Many lochs and rivers intersect the mountain ranges. The beauty of the scenery of Highland Perthshire is acknowledged widely. Lochs, woodlands, rivers, castles, moorland and mountain glen combine to form landscapes and views that now form the basis of the region's tourist industry. Even some man-made structures such as Faskally Dam and Loch have become part of the landscape, and the dam itself is a huge draw for tourists every year. Large estates, such as the Atholl Estates, dominate the land ownership pattern, and their sporting and farming interests contribute to the physical appearance, and economy, of the region. The popular perception of Highland Perthshire is of a region dominated by 'traditional' country pursuits – it is (correctly) known as a bastion of 'huntin', shootin', fishin'' types. Much of the employment in the area has traditionally been provided by the big estates, though with ongoing legislative changes in land ownership, it remains to be seen whether the influence wielded by the estate will continue.

If local newspapers can be said to represent anything of the community they serve, then the *Comment (A Newsmagazine for Highland Perthshire)* can perhaps provide something of an insider's view of life in Highland Perthshire. The main news stories relate to important local issues – road safety, for example. Even the theft of a bicycle makes the front page on occasion. Many articles relate to 'rural' issues – the recent foot and mouth outbreak, plans to create a National Park

in the nearby Cairngorm area, management of red deer in the surrounding countryside. Other articles feature local 'personalities' – from a world-class chess player 'hiding out' in a remote glen, to enthusiastic local historians and naturalists. The community seems to be well served in terms of arts and cultural opportunities, as the paper reviews theatre productions and food festivals, and many pages report the intricate workings of the various local and parish councils. Articles in the 'Trade and Business' section report the establishment of new businesses in the area, from bike hire to native species nurseries. At one level, a picture of a vibrant, thriving community emerges. Yet, underlying this are many familiar 'rural problems', such as the reporting of 'youth problems' – bored young people vandalising town property because they have nothing to do and nowhere to do it, as well as ongoing efforts to stimulate economic activity and provide more jobs in the area.

On reflection Highland Perthshire has proved to be an ideal location for this study. It has an environment that is widely perceived as being of 'high quality' both by residents and visitors. It is an overwhelmingly rural area, and exhibits many of the characteristics of a 'typical' rural economy, such as the decline of primary production and the rise of the service sector, as well as a lack of jobs for young people. Importantly, it has a relatively high rate of new business start-up, and many established small businesses exist in the area. The range of businesses is varied despite a widespread reliance on the tourist industry. Additionally, the area is accessible both in practical and research terms – issues of travel, expense and communication have not unduly restricted the research process. On the other hand, Highland Perthshire cannot be taken to be representative of *all* rural areas, neither in Scotland nor further afield. Although it is definitely 'rural' in character, Highland Perthshire is far more accessible than many other parts of rural Scotland. The A9 trunk road runs right through the heart of the study area, allowing access to Edinburgh and Glasgow to the south, Inverness in the north, in less than two hours. This accessibility has implications for many aspects of the rural economy, such as the rate of in-migration to the area, and its attractiveness to commuters. The constraints under which the region labours economically are reflected in many, more remote, rural communities.

7.3.2 The Respondents and their Businesses

The respondents as a group are not untypical of businesses in Perth & Kinross as a whole. Figure 7.3 demonstrates that in terms of size (employee numbers) the respondents' group is broadly representative of the region as a whole. Essentially, the statistics demonstrate the 'small-ness' of

the businesses in the regions and in the sample – SMEs make up the vast majority of businesses. The respondent businesses were dominated by very small, even 'micro-', businesses, employing less than 10 people (80% of respondents group). Similarly, the respondents satisfy another suggested indicator of an SME – that they are managed by the owner or family, rather than drafting in external management employees. Managers ran a few of the businesses included in the sample, usually because the owners were engaged in business activities elsewhere. Only one business in the sample group employed more than 100 people. A manager was in place, because the owners had other business interests that took them away from the business, but the manager himself had a very high level of local knowledge and proved to be a very useful interviewee. There were five businesses falling into the 25-100 employees band: four of these were resolutely local businesses, founded several years ago and growing steadily since then.

Figure 7.7 shows the respondents' businesses by sector. The group is dominated by two main sectors: local services and tourism. The former of these includes a diverse range of businesses, from professional services such as architects, to the more prosaic village grocer's shop. Obviously, many of these businesses are also available to tourists, but they primarily exist to serve local communities. The high representation of the tourism sector is to be expected given the widespread reliance on tourist trade throughout the study area due to the area's popularity as a visitor destination.

Figure 7.7 Respondent Businesses by Sector

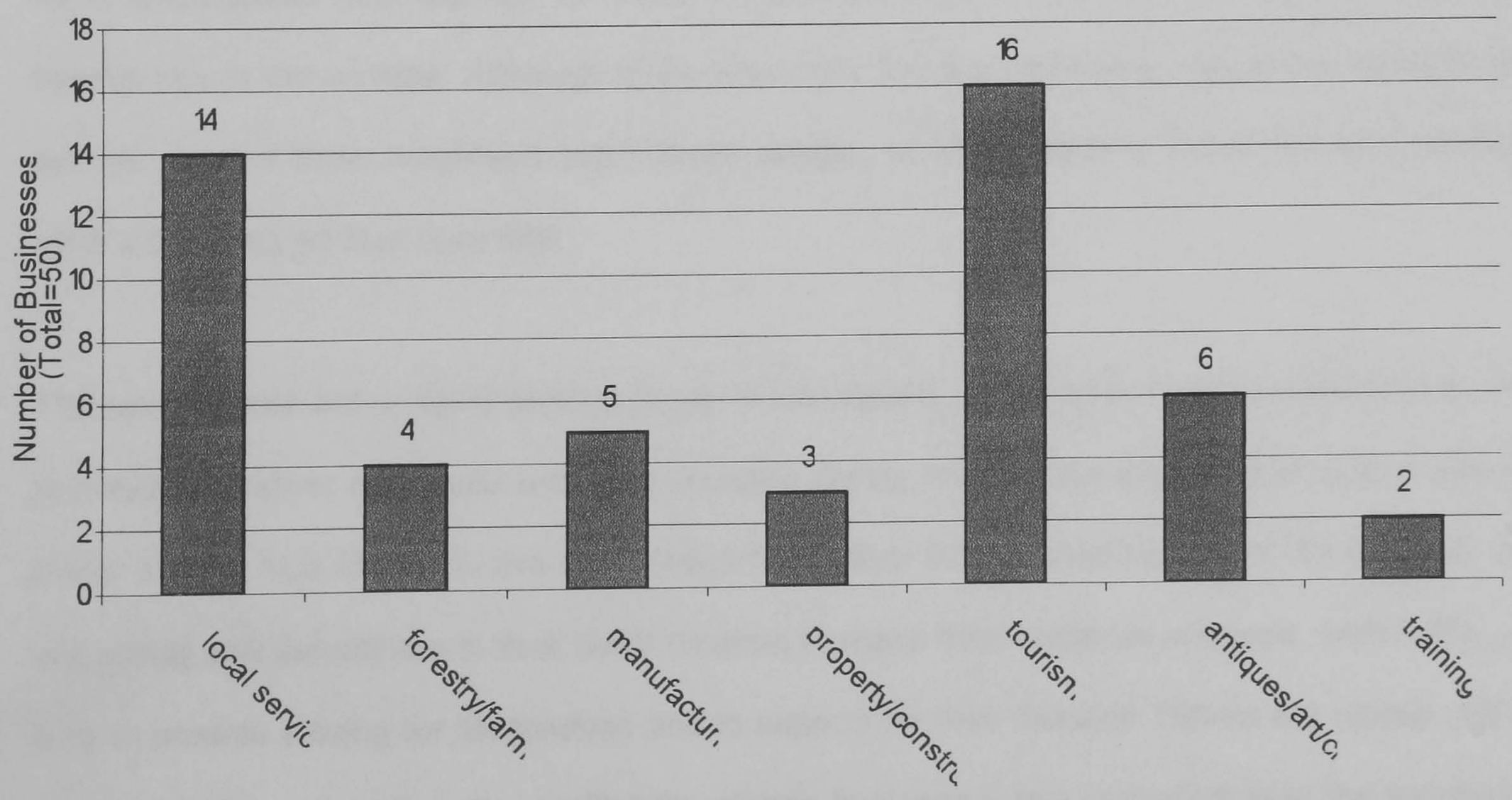


Figure 7.8 Respondent Businesses by Sector and Size

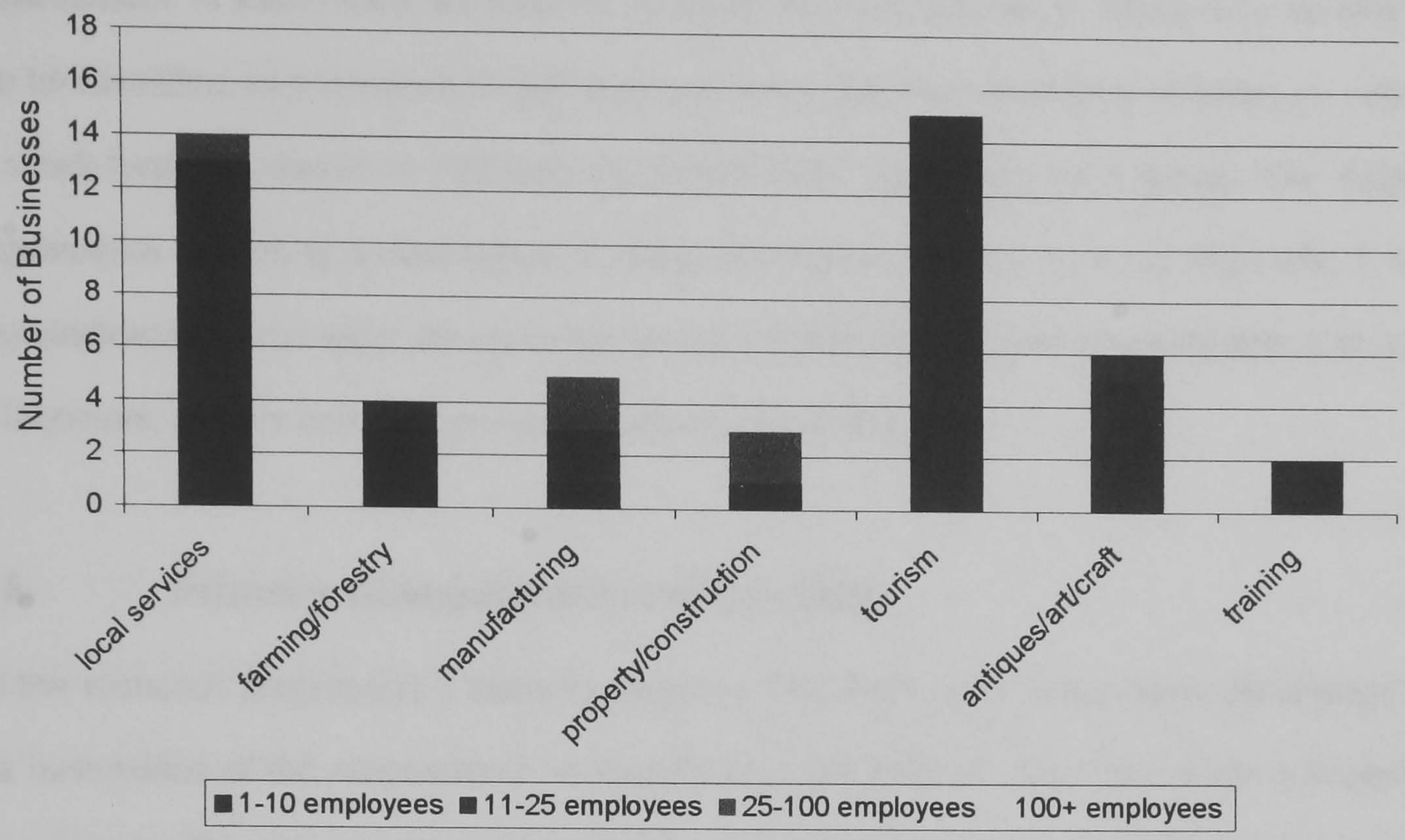


Figure 7.8 describes the respondent group in terms of both size and sector. The graph shows the dominance of micro-businesses in the sample, as in the region, but it also gives an indication of where the size distribution lies across the various sectors. For example, tourist businesses are some of the most numerous in the sample. However, the vast majority of these businesses are very small, employing only 1-10 people. The perception of certain business types as providing relatively more employment has underpinned economic development efforts that focus on the manufacturing sector. Rightly or wrongly, this sector has long been seen as providing relatively more employment than tourism, or crafts, businesses. This theory seems to be supported by the businesses in the sample. Although there were only five manufacturing operations included in the sample, four of them employed over eleven people, in comparison to fifteen tourism businesses each employing far less than that.

The respondents are a highly diverse group of individuals, as varied as the businesses they choose to establish. Some are locals with long-standing family roots, while many are incomers who have made a conscious choice to live in Highland Perthshire for personal 'quality of life' reasons. Some are young and passionate in their determination to make their business succeed, while others wish only to provide a living for themselves and to support for their families. Others are retired, yet keen to stay 'productive' – often, the profitability of their business is less important than the satisfaction it

provides. Some entrepreneurs fell into their businesses, through chancing on a happy combination of 'right time, right place, right idea' while others carefully planned and executed the establishment of their business. What this diverse and varied group of individuals do have in common is the 'Environment' in which they are located, in which they live and work. There may be little else that can be identified as a common thread between them, but the experience of being an entrepreneur or small business owner in Highland Perthshire does unite them as a group. The details of the respondents, including a description of there businesses can be found in Appendix 2. It gives a good indication of the wide variety in the groups of respondents, and also lists their status as locals or incomers, gender and their previous employment or otherwise.

7.4 Primary Categorisation of the Data

As the research progressed it became apparent that there were some basic differences between the businesses of the respondents, in respect of a link between the form of the business and the perceived quality of the environment in which the business is located. Clarifying these differences quickly became a priority in order to identify, if possible, some theoretical framework on which the further analysis of the data could be structured. Additionally, exploring these categories provided useful analytical insights into the research questions.

The first section below relates to what turned out to be a research 'red herring'. A certain theme emerged from the data, and particularly from the development of pre-understanding prior to beginning the data collection, in the early stages of the research, yet it quickly became apparent that this theme was not suitable to be used as a theoretical framework or categorisation in the further analysis of the data. At the same time, it was obvious that this theme was not so unimportant that it could be left out of any analysis of the relationship between rural enterprise and perceived environmental quality. Initially, this theme was examined carefully using constant comparison techniques, and seeking negative cases against which it could be tested. As this process progressed, it emerged that there really were no 'negative' cases: each category was so broad that all respondents could be assigned to just one category. Thus, it was impossible to use the categories in a discriminatory way to categorise the data. The sections below provide a reflective account of how these categories were initially identified, examined and subsequently rejected. It must be borne in mind that the research questions stipulated that any categorisation which emerged had to be related to the link between perceived environmental quality and rural

enterprise: this was the focus of the research questions which the study aimed to answer. It may appear that an assumption is being made here, that there is a link between the perceived quality of the local environment and rural enterprise. Perhaps this is a dangerous assumption to make: it recalls the point made by Falk and Pinhey (1986), referring to the 'reifying' of the 'rural'. That is, by not questioning certain assumptions that have been made about what 'the rural' is, researchers have inadvertently constructed 'rurality' in the image of the definition, rather than grounding such a definition in what rurality means to people who experience it daily. The development of pre-understanding, however, allows a certain level of confidence about making such an assumption. As outlined previously, many recognised authors in the subject area have observed and commented on the increasing tendency of rural areas (and rural enterprises) to act as zones of consumption, rather than production. As Bryden & Bollman point out, "public goods and new demands on the countryside" (2000: 193) are having a major impact on rural employment. Specifically, "new uses and functions" (ibid.) are emerging, which are linked to public perceptions of the countryside and the rural environment. In this paper, Bryden & Bollman pose many questions relating to these changes that wait to be answered. Other authors also point to the increasing interest in this area of rural enterprise and economy, from studies of rural enterprise in England (Keeble *et. al.* 1995, 1992) to Bryden & Munro's examination of spatial differences in rural development on Skye (2001).

Thus, the literature demonstrates that there appears some link between perceived environmental quality and rural enterprise – even if this link is difficult to identify or define at present. The aim here is to take the ideas suggested in these observations further and to explore the environment – enterprise link in the context of the rural economy.

7.4.1 Tourism in Highland Perthshire: a research 'red herring'

The first apparent classification was to split the businesses between those that could be said to be part of the tourist industry and those that were not. At one level this seems like a very straightforward observation to make in relation to any environment / enterprise link, the assumption being that tourist businesses rely on the perceived quality of the environment to attract visitors to the area, and they are thus reliant on the environment being perceived in this way. On the other hand, businesses that are not 'tourist businesses' must rely on some other market, and thus do not rely on the local environment being perceived as being of high quality: they could potentially operate anywhere, irrespective of perceived environmental quality. At first glance this appeared to be a suitable primary classification of the data that would highlight the dependence of certain

businesses on the perceived high quality environment relative to those which were not. There are, however, several reasons why this initial classification was decided not to be appropriate.

Defining 'tourist businesses' is difficult in practice. Some seem quite obvious (guest houses, hotels, B&Bs for example) in that they exist for the benefit of tourists and visitors, and these businesses at least can be said to rely, solely, on the 'attractiveness' of Highland Perthshire to visitors. Perceived environmental quality (and cultural values and heritage and a whole range of other 'intangibles') is fundamental to the existence of these businesses. Outdoor recreation providers also rely on visitors. These businesses range from white water rafting to hill walking to mountain bike hire, and there are many such enterprises in the study area. For these businesses, the 'natural' environment provides the setting in which these activities take place. It appears that the quality of the environment in which the businesses are located makes the experience 'extra special'. Roddy, who owns a rafting company, said that many of his customers were people who had been attracted to Highland Perthshire as a visitor destination and then decided to use his business when they cam across it, especially when his business first started. Roddy was quite clear about the way his business relies on the quality of the environment, as perceived by his customers. He pointed out, "*there's a man-made white water course in Nottingham, another one in Teeside. It gives people a base, but it's not the same...it's like going in a swimming pool... Get them out on a wild river and it freaks them... that's what they like about it*". So, like the previous group of respondents, these entrepreneurs do depend on the quality of the surrounding environment , although the nature of that dependence may be somewhat different. Not only does this latter group rely on the attractiveness of the environment to draw their clients to the area, they use the environment as a physical setting in which their experiential 'product' is consumed. Whereas the accommodation providers encourage passive consumption of the 'natural environment', the recreation providers rely on selling active consumption of environmental experiences.

Of the respondents, these two groups comprise the 'tourism businesses' (businesses which rely directly on the tourist/visitor market), which could imply that all the other businesses in the group are 'non-tourism' businesses. Yet, many respondents from these 'non-tourism' businesses stated quite clearly that they relied heavily on the tourist trade for the success of their businesses, despite not necessarily operating their enterprises as a 'tourist' business. For example, many of the businesses that provide local services rely on the custom of visitors to supplement local trade.

They cannot be described as 'tourism' businesses because they do not rely solely on visitors to the area, yet it is doubtful whether many would survive without the yearly influx of visitors. Many respondents in this group were insistent that local trade was their prime source of custom, but they also took advantage of the visitors' presence. Margaret, who runs a relatively large transport firm has devoted most of her energies to building up a businesses which does not rely on tourist trade: she described her trade with visitors as *"the cherry on the top of the cake"*. Margaret is quite convinced that, were Highland Perthshire to suddenly be deprived of the seasonal influx of tourists, her business would not be unduly affected. In this way, her businesses could not be described as a 'tourist' business. On the other hand, she does provide services for visitors (hire of cars and minibuses) and benefits from the seasonal influx of visitors.

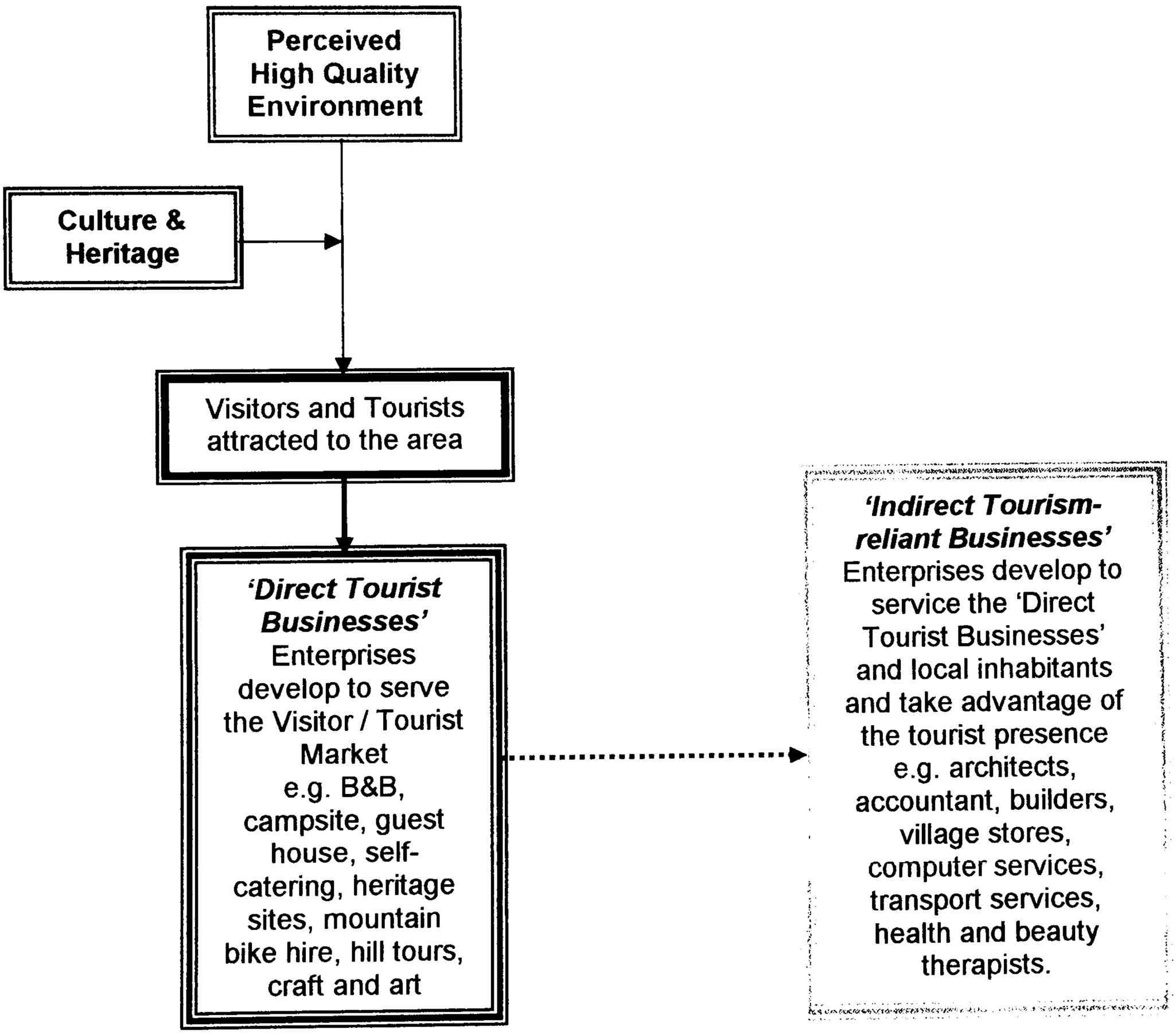
Retail services, are another example of this dichotomy. They serve local communities, and often act as important community foci in remote areas. However, they also cater to visitors, such as self-catering tourists, and those looking for a 'brew' and a 'loo' to go with their 'view' during a day trip. Allan, who runs a sub-post office, store and teashop in a very remote location, pointed out that the only profitable part of his business is the teashop, which caters to passing tourist trade. The post office and grocery store services are essential to the local community, but without the tourist trade in the teashop, the business would cease to exist. Allan would not describe his business as a 'tourist enterprise' because the community focus is more important to him, but he certainly relies on their presence.

Greg, a carpenter and 'housecraftsman' provided another example, which also demonstrates this point. His business is very small, just himself and occasional contracted labour. Although his business would not seem to be dependent on the tourist trade, it emerged during the interview that the majority of his customers are. Most of Greg's work was for small shops and guesthouses in the area: without them, he would have no customers, and without visitors his customers would have no customers. Thus, although Clive's business cannot be described as a 'tourism' business because he has no direct contact with tourists, he indirectly relies on them to keep the businesses he does rely on, in existence. Another respondent, Richard, who runs a computer services business, summed up the situation well. He said, in reference to his own business and others, *"...any business here is either directly or indirectly dependent on tourism, which in turn depends on the environment – which is the thing that attracts tourists in the first place".* Diagram 7.1 below outlines

the importance of perceived environmental quality in maintaining the all-important tourism market in Highland Perthshire.

These examples given demonstrate the overwhelming importance of the tourist industry in Highland Perthshire. Time and time again during the interviews, respondents acknowledged that they relied on tourism and visitors either directly or indirectly. For this reason, the initial categorisation of businesses into 'tourist' and 'non-tourist' categories was rejected. Because virtually *all* businesses relied on the tourist presence in the area in one way or another, it was not possible to use these categories as discriminatory in any way. So, while the relationship between perceived environmental quality, visitor presence and business success is very real, it could not be developed further to provide a theoretical framework upon which the data could be 'hung'.

Diagram 7.1 The Relationship of Perceived Environmental Quality to the Tourist Market in Highland Perthshire



Using this primary classification, there was no way that businesses or respondents could be classified in terms of their relationship with the surrounding environment: to varying extents they *all*

relied upon the high quality environment, either directly or indirectly, through their reliance on tourism. It was too important an observation to ignore, which is why it has been accounted for here, but it did not fit the purposes of this investigation, which seeks to explain the relationship between perceived environmental quality and the form of the rural enterprise.

7.5 Enterprise in a Perceived High Quality Environment

Once the influence of the tourist market and its pervasive influence in the study area was accounted for, it was possible to move on and examine in more detail some of the other apparent differences between various entrepreneurs and their businesses. It became apparent early on in the research that the businesses themselves seemed to fall into two categories in terms of their relationship to the perceived quality of the environment in which they were located. Many of the businesses examined seemed to share certain characteristics in terms of their product, their marketing strategy and their niche market. The products were often 'special' in some way, being artistic or hand-crafted – or at least giving the impression of being so – or they were essentially experiential – the purchaser was buying an experience of some sort. The emphasis in the marketing strategy focused strongly on 'quality', and used both environmental and cultural imagery and values in their marketing material. All the businesses in this group were focused on a national or even international market, which was in turn dominated by tourists. The second group were quite different businesses. Their products are fairly mundane – tins of baked beans or plumbing services – and the markets they serve were resolutely local. Their marketing strategy focused again on quality, but the idea of 'quality service' seemed to be based more on their 'local-ness', and the long-standing nature of their business.

The key difference between the two groups, and the discriminatory basis for categorisation that was identified is outlined below, in terms of each groups' relationship to, or use of, the environment in their entrepreneurial strategy.

- *Environmental Enterprises*: businesses which depend on, or otherwise use, their location in a perceived high quality environment to the positive advantage of their business;
- *Prosaic Enterprises*: businesses that do not depend on, or otherwise use, their location in a perceived high quality environment for the benefit of the business.

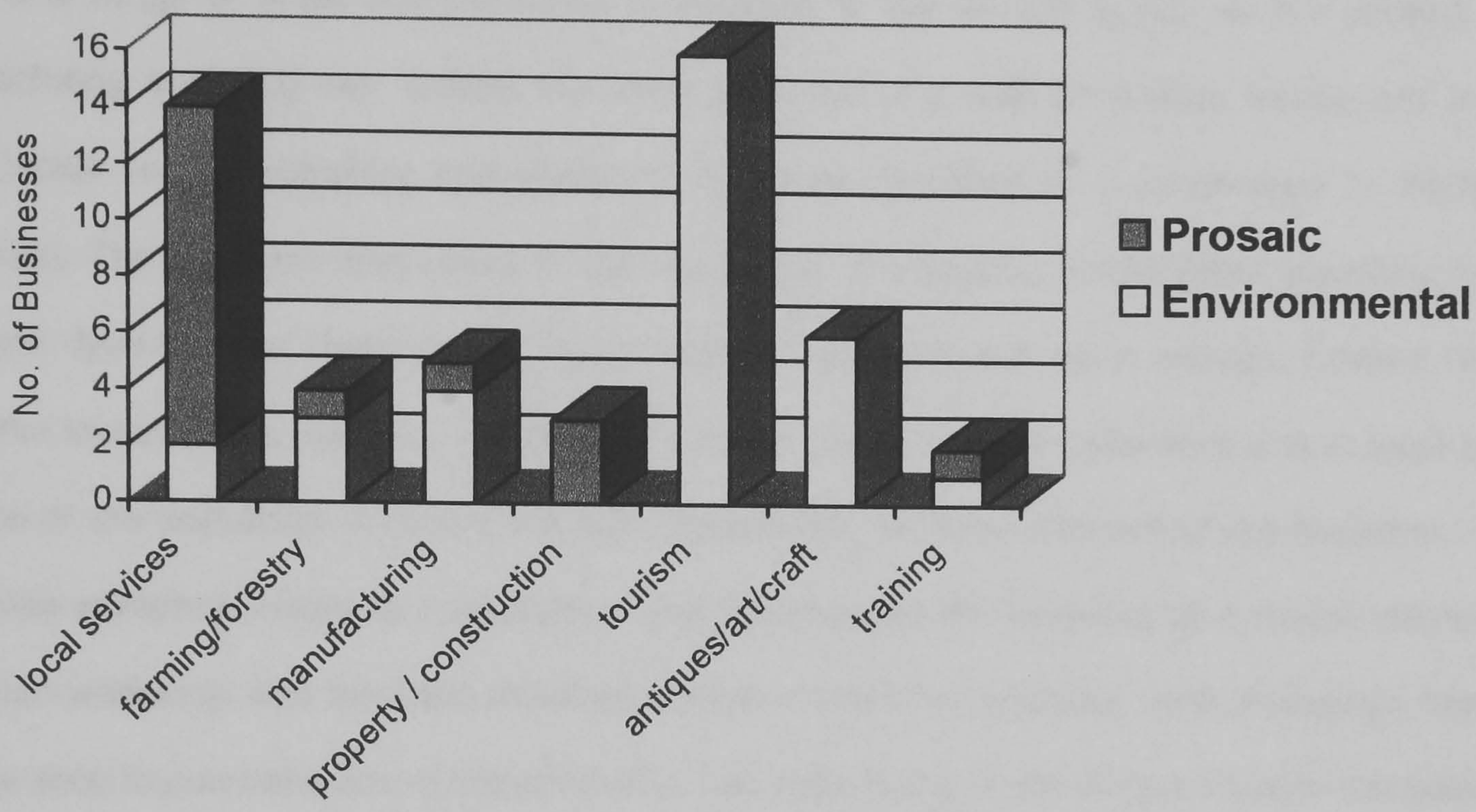
In comparison to the previous 'red-herring' this categorisation does allow the research question to be explored fully, as it is discriminatory. Businesses and entrepreneurs can be assigned to one category or the other, though not always unambiguously. Where an uncertainty does arise, it is interesting to explore that particular case in detail as a means of deepening understanding about that theme: negative case analysis has been identified above as a way to test the robustness of the categories.

Having identified the primary categorisation as above, the aim now is to explore the details of each group of respondents and their businesses. This section builds on the initial classification of the data to explore the differences in the ways that the two different business forms operate. This links back to the research question, which aims to establish how rural enterprises are related to the perceived quality of the environment in which they are located. Specifically, the aim is to determine how various businesses *use* the environment as a resource. The starting point of this exploration is the previous observation that, increasingly, businesses in rural areas are geared towards 'selling the rural / environment' rather than primary production – the more traditional form of rural enterprise. The focus of this section is, therefore, to see *how* they do this. Conversely, the businesses that do not do this are examined too, in order to distinguish the differences between the two groups. The idea of 'value' is also explored. In chapter 3 a "plurality of values" relating to sustainable development was referred to, and this concept applies here too. The creation of enterprise incorporates a whole range of values, emanating from both the individual entrepreneur and society as a whole. It is likely, as suggested in chapter 4, that these values are very important in the entrepreneurial process. Indeed, the emergent theory hinges on the idea that entrepreneurs are able to 'extract value from their environment'. The key in this study is to identify the sources of these values, and to determine the process of value extraction and commodification in relation to the high quality environment in which the respondents are located.

Figure 7.9 outlines the categorisation of businesses into the groups 'prosaic' and 'environmental', which are discussed below. It is interesting to examine which sector each type of business is found in. 'Prosaic' businesses, those which cater for 'everyday' needs and services, dominate the 'local services' sector, and the 'property / construction' sector. 'Environmental' businesses, on the other hand, make up the 'tourism' and 'art/craft/antiques' sector, and are found in the primary production

sector. This distribution across the services sector is not particularly startling: however it can be explored to confirm some of the dimensions of the 'prosaic' / 'environmental' business differences.

Figure 7.9 Sectoral Distribution of 'Environmental' and 'Prosaic' Businesses



7.5.1 Environmental Enterprises

The list of respondents presented in Appendix 2 demonstrates the wide variety in respondent businesses. One dimension of the enterprise process is the form of the good, or service, that the business makes available to its customers. Despite the aforementioned variation in the businesses, in terms of the product they offer, the businesses can be generalised into more abstract categories. The aim is to describe not just the everyday actions of the business, but to abstract from this to describe the *form* of the products and services offered, and the way in which these are produced and marketed. The businesses that fall into the group of 'environmental enterprises' are listed in Appendix 3, including the products that each business provides, and a description of the environmental values that have been commodified by the entrepreneurs in the process of environmental enterprise.

There are many aspects of the businesses that can be explored in order to identify how rural entrepreneurs incorporate certain environmental values and perceptions into the production process, thereby creating a product that is seen as 'special'. The respondent's own attitudes

towards the importance of existing perceptions of environmental quality were explored during the interviews, applying both to their own experiences and the attitudes of their customers. The most important of these aspects are discussed below.

Tangible and Intangible Values in the Production Process

There is a range of small manufacturing businesses in the sample group. In this context, the manufacturing sectoring can include the many small art and craft production businesses in the area. Jackie runs a jewellery manufacturing business operating in a small town in Highland Perthshire. The business specialises in the production of attractive 'handcrafted' jewellery, using dried and dyed heather stems set in 'Celtic' designs, with gold and silver settings. I asked Jackie about the layout of the business – it seemed strange to me that the sales floor was at least twice the size of the workshop. It turned out that, despite the 'working' element of the business – the open plan workshop visible to customers – she actually saw the business as a tourist enterprise. The open workshop was intended to attract customers into the business, and encourage them to visit the shop to purchase one of the items they had seen being made. In fact, most of the jewellery for sale in the shop was made in a factory in Irvine, and transported for sale to Highland Perthshire. The handmade items created in the workshop were generally destined for export to overseas markets. What was being created in the business was an illusion: visitors purchasing a souvenir of their visit to Perthshire, were actually buying something that had been mass-produced elsewhere in the country. The true nature of the production process was kept secret from the customers. One could ask – is this any different from buying a furry Nessy toy, sold at Loch Ness and made in Taiwan? The answer would have to be that yes, perhaps it is different. No person (one presumes) would imagine that a Nessy toy was lovingly handcrafted on the shores of Loch Ness. However, with a visible workshop, a constantly running video of the 'story of heather jewellery' and a tartan-and-heather draped sales room, customers at Jackie's business were most certainly encouraged to believe that they were buying a certain type of product that had been hand-crafted in the Highlands.

I asked Jackie what she saw as her 'product' – was it just the piece of jewellery (in which case the origins might not matter to the customer) or was it something more? She replied that her customers liked the "*Scottishness*" of the product, and that being located in Highland Perthshire was useful because of "*the Scottish associations of the area... they link to the product – the hills and the*

heather, the castles...". So Jackie is not just selling jewellery, she is selling something inherently 'Scottish' and it seems reasonable to claim that these 'products' are, in a way, icons of 'Scottishness', drawing on the qualities of the Scottish environment through the use of such a symbolic material (heather) in their making.

The business discussed above draws on the intangible, but no less potent, value inherent in 'Scotland the Brand'. As McCrone, Morris & Keily (1999) point out the 'Scottish environment' is an important component of this overall 'brand identity'. Certainly, Jackie was aware of the importance of the local environment to her business. High 'environmental' quality, *per se*, was not necessarily her concern, but the visual perception of the landscape tied in well with her product, and added a great deal of value to it in the eyes of her customers.

The perceived high quality of the environment may not have been Jackie's prime concern in marketing her product, but it certainly was for some of the other respondents. David, for example, runs a family business consisting of a deer farm and smokery situated in a particularly remote and visually stunning location. His products, consisting of various smoked venison products and other food goods are sold locally, nationally and internationally. The nature of the business is such that it could – as above – be classified as a manufacturing or processing business. Yet David is well aware that the location of his business, and the perceptions of his clients about this location, are as valuable to the success of his business as the products themselves. Even clients who never visited the actual location of the business are drawn into this perception. He said, "*I think they have a sort of romantic image of us being here in a little shed in the Highlands, which I think certainly sells the product to the customer... They sort of think of us sitting here in our rural environment, occasionally pushing out a stack of smoked this or smoked that".* Again, as above, the paradox is that David's business is extremely up-to-date and well equipped, consisting of a small modern factory, albeit in a remote rural location. The realities of production are very different from the customer's perceptions. Tied into this are ideas about the environment in which production takes place, with indicators of 'high quality' such as 'remoteness', 'cleanliness', and 'naturalness', becoming entwined with the product itself. Both David and Jackie use these perceptions to mask the reality of the production process, which is in many ways a negation of the values their customers seem to hold dear – and both entrepreneurs are well aware of this. David, for example, told me that he is keen to expand the business, but faces a difficult decision. The existing location of the business is too small for further on-site expansion, and poor road connections are becoming a major problem

as production levels increase. Yet moving to a more practical location would risk disrupting his customer's perceptions of how and where and in what circumstances the goods are produced. He said, "*it [the location in a high quality natural environment] does contribute a lot...we would lose a bit of it certainly, if we moved elsewhere*". David has opted to remain in his current location for the time being, and to try and expand within the limited space of the site. It is also interesting to note that direct purchase of smoked goods is not encouraged at David's factory – any customers that do turn up are directed, by a sign, to the local village shop. I asked David about this and he replied that "*there is nothing to gain by having people come here. It's not what they expect to find – they can't see us smoking the products or anything. They're as well going to the shop for it – they need the custom more than we do*". David actively discourages the casual visitor to the site because the business would have nothing to gain – and potentially might lose some of the 'mystique' that surrounds the production process.

The examples given above highlight the link between environmental quality and how the customer values a certain type of product and production process. Another craftsperson, Laura, a potter, summed this up nicely by saying "*I think when people come to places like [Highland Perthshire] they expect to find certain things. They don't want mass-produced goods, they want something special they can take away with them, that reminds them of the place and what they liked about it*". People visiting a 'special place' expect to find 'special products'. The 'something special' which Laura mentions supports this idea of 'added value' where the customer buys not only the product, but all the signs and symbolic values tied up in the item – and environmental values are a particularly rich source of such symbolic value (Benton 1995). Environmental values, tied into customer perceptions of quality, are part of that 'value bundle', along with other intangibles such as 'heritage' and 'tradition'. The quality of the environment in which these businesses are located is perceived by the customer to be high: in it they recognise certain elements which indicate 'high quality', the signifiers identified in the previous chapter. This value is transferred to, or incorporated into, goods that (they believe) are produced in this environment. David, Jackie, Laura and others are actively managing their businesses in a way which allows them to benefit economically from what is an intangible source of value: they are successfully turning 'soft' perceptions into 'hard' cash, and as shall be discussed further, this seems to be the key to successful environmental enterprise in a perceived high quality environment.

Environmental and Product Integrity: Retail in the Rural

Retail businesses provided a fascinating example of environmental enterprise in a perceived high quality environment. Retailers in the study area vary from small and basic village stores, some of which combine a sub-post office, a shop and a teashop in one room, to large and luxurious outlets, selling a range of luxury goods from across the region. Similarly, they sell a whole range of products from basic food goods to luxury products. Yet, despite being in the same business sector, the form of the business dictated that some were able to exploit the perceived quality of the environment in which they are located, while some could not. Those businesses that do make use of environmental values are discussed below.

Harry manages a large retail outlet that is well known in the region for its high quality, luxury textiles and food goods. The business has been nicknamed "the Harrods of the North" and certainly markets itself as such. With well over 100 employees, his business is the largest employer in the sample group, and one of the largest in the study area. It is located on the main trunk road through the region, but sits on the edge of a small village and on land owned by the Atholl Estates, both facts that Harry was keen to emphasise to me. The building itself is eye-catching, to say the least – built in what could be called a modern, faux-'Scots Baronial' style, to resemble a castle set around a central courtyard. The various buildings house a textile hall, a golfing shop, a garden centre and a well-stocked food hall, as well as a café and restaurant facilities. I asked Harry about the importance of perceptions of environmental quality among his customers. He replied, "*...we pull a lot of people from Edinburgh and Glasgow, who very much see their visit to [the business] not just as a shopping trip, but as a day out, an experience of Highland Perthshire*". So Harry isn't just selling top of the range tweeds and golfing jumpers, handmade cheeses and whisky fudge, he sees himself as selling an 'experience'. By virtue of his location in the 'high quality' environment of Highland Perthshire, Harry is able to extend the value of his product beyond the mere purchase of an item. He is very aware of this source of value and keen to make the most of it: "*we always, always try to promote quality... I think you can point to the environment around us, which we are very, very lucky to have... We very much try to promote our location as somewhere which represents what we are about inside*". In order to test Harry's response I asked him a reverse question: what would be the impact on your business if something happened to reduce the quality of the environment around here? As an example I suggested the development of housing in the

fields next to the business. Harry's response was interesting. At first he refused to countenance the very suggestion that this could happen, ("*we're lucky in whatever deal somebody was going to offer [the landowners] for that bit of land, we could offer them more. It wouldn't happen")*. When I pressed him on this question he said, "*the [landowners] are not going to do that to us. They'd shaft us if they did... but they're not going to do that*". Harry seemed to not want to even contemplate the consequences for the business if a nearby development changed the nature of his surroundings for the worse. His customer's perceptions of the quality of the environment in which the business is located are of prime importance in the continuing success of the business. Harry has been very successful in forging a strong connection between the perceived quality of the business location, and the associated quality of the luxury food and textiles that he sells. The original decision to locate the business was made partially on this basis of this perception. He said, "*We looked at another site down near Auchterarder [where] potentially you are surrounded by an awful lot more people, but the feeling was that the environment that the business was to be developed in, was much more suited to what we have here. And it was a huge risk – there was an initial investment of £5 million*". Thus, both the initial decision to locate the business in Highland Perthshire, and the ongoing success of the business are strongly influenced by the perceived quality of the environment. The potential of the site was recognised by the owners, and Harry himself seems convinced that the future success of the business is rooted in maintaining the integrity of the surrounding environment.

Susan owns another type of retail business, which is very different to Harry's. A much more modest enterprise, Susan has established a shop on the organic farm she runs with her husband and his family. They took the decision to convert to organic production two years ago, and Susan recently established the shop as an outlet for their own goods and various other organic products. The shop is small, consisting of a kitchen, office and sales room. Outside, a few wooden bench-tables form a seasonal café for customers. She employs herself, a cook who produces ready-meals and caters for the visitors, and two part-time, seasonal staff. Despite the differences in their businesses, both Harry and Susan are in a position to make use of the environment in which they are located to add value to their products. I asked Susan if she felt the location of the business brought anything positive to it. She replied, "*Yes, definitely. It's a rustic kind of shop and the scenery is amazing outside... people like coming here – they enjoy it... it's definitely a shopping experience*". Again, Susan is selling more than just the organic produce – she is selling 'an experience' that is valued

by her customers. They value the 'environmentally-sound' appearance of her business ("*the building is made of wood, it's stained green, it has a slate roof – it looks traditional, so it fits in with the environment*"). In keeping with the overall 'organic' appeal, Susan emphasises the 'natural' production process ("*the natural thing, it's what we're pushing with the whole organic produce thing*") in her marketing material. She revealed that she had considered locating the business in a nearby town, but quickly rejected that idea. When weighing up the likely benefits from a semi-urban location against those of her current location, the positive advantage of being located in an environment that was considered attractive and 'natural' tipped the balance. She said, "*We did consider whether it would work in a town... but I just wanted it to be a farm shop in the countryside. The beauty here is that ... it's all part and parcel of the shop as a whole, part of the whole environment, the experience*".

The responses show that, despite their very different businesses, both Susan and Harry are in a position to exploit the environmental values their customers perceive as being inherent in their locations. Indeed, the perceived advantage influenced their initial decisions to locate the businesses in a certain kind of place. Harry uses the perceived quality and exclusivity of his business location to indicate the high quality and luxury status of the goods he sells. Susan, on the other hand, makes a feature of the 'rough and ready' nature of her location – a rather bleak upland hill farm – to emphasise the 'natural' origins of her products. Although the details vary, Susan and Harry's activities are very similar at an abstract level: the quality of the business location, as perceived by both themselves and their customers, is used to indicate the quality of the products they sell. Both acknowledge very strongly the importance of this business location, and are quite positive that a negative change in the perceived environmental quality of this location would be to the detriment of their businesses.

Experiential Values in the Tourism Sector

Although it was pointed out previously that 'tourism' businesses are difficult to rigorously identify, in this context it refers to businesses providing accommodation and activities specifically for visitors to the area. As such, the group includes accommodation providers of all sorts, and outdoor recreation companies. As described above, at one level this group's dependence on the perceived high quality of the Perthshire environment is plain to see: visitors are attracted by the scenic qualities of the area, which provides a market without which these businesses would not survive. At a deeper

level, however, it is useful to examine the different forms of the products and services offered by these various businesses.

The respondents included different types of accommodation providers, from campsites to B&Bs to a backpacker hostel. All such respondents acknowledged the importance of the quality of the environment to their business. Janet, who runs a B&B and 'farmstay' on the family farm said, "*That's why people come here – for the scenery, the hills, the walks, the peace and beauty*", confirming this point and emphasizing the 'remoteness', 'apparent naturalness' and aesthetic beauty that her customers value. However, Ellie, who owns a backpacker hostel in the area, while acknowledging this point made another, more pertinent one. When asked about how important perceptions of 'naturalness' are to her customers and her business, she replied, "*I would imagine that most visitors here don't really think about the dam and the loch being man-made, you know, affecting the environment like that... - but I certainly don't talk about it!*" Ellie's business benefits from the visitor's perception that the landscape around her hostel is 'natural' – it is one of the attractions she advertises in her marketing material. Yet, she is well aware that this is not really the case, and that the 'natural' appearance of the landscape is due more to the softening effects of time. Importantly, she doesn't want to 'break the spell' because the consequences for her business may be negative. Her customers are attracted to the area by certain perceptions they hold about the quality of the environment there, of which 'naturalness' is an important component, and Ellie is in a position to benefit from these perceptions.

As described previously, being able to offer in recreational activities in a pristine 'natural' environment is of particular value to most outdoor recreation businesses that do cater for tourists. In chapter 6, where perceptions of environmental quality were explored among the wider public, those who reported that their main use of such environments was during recreation and outdoor sports emphasised certain specific qualities: *remote, pristine, natural, challenging, wilderness*. Neil, owner of a mountain bike hire business, confirmed this: "*there's definitely something very appealing to people [who cycle] about getting to places where there is nothing*". So in a very real way, the environment does act as a resource for these businesses. Yet, even at this level of direct reliance on the environment, certain illusions are being projected and maintained by the entrepreneurs. Neil, for example, prefaced the comment above by saying, "*The Clearances were one of the worst things that ever happened to Scotland but...*" Despite the apparent fact that he is aware of the

history of the "*places where there is nothing*", he is happy to go along with the illusion that they are 'naturally' remote and empty: it fits with both his own values (as a keen mountain biker who loves the 'empty places'), and his customer's perceptions of the area. One is reminded here of Chris Smout's plea that ecologists remember the history of the places they study, and casually describe as 'semi-natural' (1997). Neil provides maps and route guides detailing local cycles routes: he does not provide history or ecology lessons on the 'true' nature of the environment through which his customers wish to cycle.

Other respondents were not so willing to accommodate such illusions, despite the possible consequences for their business. Graham, who runs a business offering mountain tours and activity training courses, works with tourists for perhaps two months of the year. He stated "*when I'm working with clients they do like to think of me as being up in the mountains. They're shocked when I don't drive a 4X4, they ask 'how do you get around – this is just an ordinary car!' It's important to them – they would like to see me turn up in a Range Rover*". Even though he recognises that his clients have certain expectations regarding the rural environment, and how to live within it, he refuses to cater to the illusion. In fact Graham almost revels in his rejection of – as he sees it – "meaningless values". He lives in a modern bungalow, drives a family saloon and runs a second small business decorating cakes in his spare time. He is an exception to the rule in refusing to 'play the game' and cater to visitor expectations, even though he works in some of the most remote and beautiful areas in the region on a daily basis. Further discussion revealed the reasons for Graham's approach. The main focus of Graham's business is not guiding tourists up and down mountains, in fact he describes this as a "*fickle market and ... not a very satisfying market... [catering for tourists] everyday is pretty tedious*". Rather, he focuses his attention on providing professional training in mountain skills for outdoor instructors and other professionals. Therefore, Graham doesn't feel the need to cater to the expectations of visitors who hold certain preconceived ideas about what a 'mountain man' should be like. He is not in the business of providing experiences, rather he is providing training services for like-minded professionals. His business is a good test of the emergent theory: he recognises the potential source of value inherent in both his business type and his location, and is aware that it could be exploited with a certain group of clients. Yet, he himself does not buy into these perceptions, and – unlike other 'tourist' businesses – he is in a position that he does not have to cater to illusions he sees as "*nonsense*" and "*distorted*". He went on to describe the idea that entrepreneurs use the quality of

the environment as an indication of quality in the product as "*twisted advertising – it doesn't reflect anything to do with the real product*". Graham has deliberately shaped his business and focused on developing the professional training market. Although Graham and his business do not fit easily into this category of 'environmental enterprises', accounting for his case provides some insights into this classification by demonstrating the point that different client groups have different expectations of a business and a product, which can be tied into their perceptions of environmental quality.

7.5.2 Prosaic Enterprises

The smaller category consisted of those respondents whose businesses did not 'use' the environment as a resource from which to extract value. Essentially, the form of the business and, specifically, that of the product made any 'environmental value-product value' link difficult to establish. This is not to imply that these entrepreneurs had tried to make such a link and failed: many had not, and it would not have occurred to them to do so. The nature of their enterprises is such that it is not amenable to any such marketing ploy, as is discussed below.

Figure 7.9 described the distribution of 'prosaic' businesses across the various economic sectors, and Table 7.1 below lists the various businesses that fall into this group. The majority are 'local services', ranging from village stores to professional services such as architects, accountants and consultants. As above, an examination of the products and services offered by this group can provide an insight into whether or not there is any link to be made between perceived quality of the business location, and the business itself. Using the constant comparison method, the data for this group was compared to that of the environmental enterprises, in order to seek out both similarities and differences between them. Additionally, as above, the process of analytic induction allowed negative or unexpected cases to be explored in order to seek understanding of variation within the group.

There were two emergent themes in the data that may have indicated some link between the perceived quality of the environment and this business, neither of which were apparent in the product or service provided by the business. One of these, the importance of the tourist market, was outlined previously, and was shown to be an underlying influence in the rural economy: at one level all businesses rely to some extent on the presence of visitors, who in turn are drawn to the

area by 'the natural environment', among other things. All the respondents in this group alluded to either their dependence on tourists for custom ("*we'd probably limp along without the tourists, but they're a real boost to the business in the summer*"). The other major 'environmental' influence was the decision of some entrepreneurs to move to the study area for personal or lifestyle reasons ("*we*

Table 7.1 Prosaic Enterprises within the Respondent Group

	Name	**Type of Business**	**Market Niche**
1	Jean	2nd hand bookshop	Local, some tourism
2	Elisa	Grocery store	Local, some tourism
3	Linda	Clothing Store	Local, some tourism
4	Richard	Computer Services	Local, some tourism
5	Margaret	Transport services: car hire, minibus	Local, little tourism
6	Ross	Game processor and distributor	National
7	Michael	Architect	Local, regional
8	Tim	Project Management	International
9	Gordon	Construction services	Local
10	Dave	Grocery store	Local, some tourism
11	John	Garden centre, landscape gardeners	Local, some tourism
12	Greg	Building crafts	Local
13	Sarah	Training consultancy	Local, some national
14	Beth	Cooking agency	Some local, some tourism
15	Joy	Shaitsu massage, alternative therapies	Local, some tourism
16	Norman	Media consultancy	National
17	Allan	Sub-post-office, tea room, basic stores	Local, some tourism
18	Doreen	Environmental consultancy	National

love it here – there is really no other reason [for choosing to locate a business in Highland Perthshire]"). Again, the perceived quality of the rural environment was a major pull factor for the in-migrants, and for locals who chose to remain in the area. Yet, as above, this theme was not appropriate to be developed: all entrepreneurs, both prosaic and environmental, confirmed that the quality of the 'natural' environment of Highland Perthshire was a factor in their decision to live and work in the area. Thus, the lifestyle advantages of living in the study area could not be used as a basis for the comparative analysis of the different businesses. All the respondents, to varying degrees, acknowledged the positive qualities of the Highland Perthshire environment as a place to live. Yet the aim of this current study is to examine whether the business form adopted by these entrepreneurs differed in any way, with respect to the perceived quality of the environment. To do this required that the 'availability of tourist market' and the 'lifestyle' reasons for starting a business were laid to one side, at least at this stage.

Essentially, the prosaic businesses were identified by asking the question, 'if something happened to reduce or compromise the quality of the 'natural' environment in Highland Perthshire, would you still be able to successfully run your business in this location?' With some exceptions, the 'environmental' enterprises were those that answered 'no' or 'with great difficulty' to this question, while the 'prosaic' businesses said 'yes'. This was very useful in identifying the two primary business categories. With this latter group, once the 'reliance on tourism / desired rural lifestyle' influences had been moved to one side, there were no apparent links to be found between the form of the business and the perceived quality of the local environment. Neither the products, the production process, nor the marketing strategies made use of popular perceptions of environmental quality, despite being located in a place that fulfils many people's understandings of what such an environment is. This is not to say that these businesses do not belong where they are: they most certainly do because they serve a range of local needs and contribute to the well-being of many small and threatened communities. However, in terms of perceived environmental quality, they are not in a position to exploit a source of value that is accessible to their 'environmental' or 'special' counterparts discussed above. Conversely, they do not seem to be dependent on the perceived quality of the local environment, in the same way or to the same extent as their 'environmental' counterparts.

The importance of identifying and examining this group is that it allows extensive testing of the emergent themes relating to use of perceived environmental quality as a resource for the business. Businesses that are superficially similar, in that they fall into the same business sector (retail and other services, manufacturing and processing), can be shown to adopt very different entrepreneurial strategies in relation to their ability to use the environment as a resource for the business. Identifying the existence of such a strategy, as outlined previously, is only one step in the research: testing the ideas that emerge from the data are the key to rigorous analysis, and subsequent theory development.

Prosaic Production

Some small manufacturing and processing businesses were described above as examples of enterprises that make use of the perceived quality of the environment in marketing their products. It is interesting to compare, for example, the smokeries, with another similar business – one that does not appear to make use of its location value in this way. Ross manages a game processing

plant. The business itself is a relatively large employer in the area, employing about 16 people, and more during times of peak production. It is located in a large, industrial factory site, complete with loading bays for lorries and Portakabin accommodation for office staff. When I asked Ross about the importance of the quality of the environment in which his business is located, he replied, "*I don't know if it is important, directly. It's certainly important that there is a pollution free place for the game to grow in*". So in some ways the environment is important to Ross' business, but in a rather more 'objective' way than it was for David. Ross' understanding of environmental quality seems to be more akin to that of the 'professionals', the pollution-monitoring agencies like SEPA, mentioned in chapter 3. This became quite apparent as Ross talked on. I asked him if he would think of any changes in the environment that might affect the success of his business. The only example he could think of was that of Chernobyl, referring to an explosion at a Russian nuclear facility in April, 1986. His concern had been that the fallout would affect the hills where his 'raw material' is grown, and he worried at the time that he would not be allowed to use local suppliers of game. Ross' environmental concern focused on a specific threat to the environmental quality of the hills – pollution of a particularly insidious kind. Ross was the only respondent who mentioned anything like this: most other respondents referred in fairly vague terms to 'development' or 'changing the nature of the landscape' as potential negative changes. When questioned about these more intangible aspects of environmental quality, he replied, "*It doesn't really apply to us as it might to others because we mostly deal in wholesale rather than direct to the public, so we don't have to market it for the public*". Thus, Ross' enterprise is catering for a different market to the other producers – a market that doesn't care so much for allusions to intangible environmental quality and the associated higher value of the product. Although he recognises that other businesses can market the product in this way, it is irrelevant to his business because it operates in a different way and there is no need for him to emphasise the 'natural' qualities of his product. Many of his customers are professional chefs, and are more concerned with the quality and safety of the product as an ingredient, not with intangible environmental values that might be associated with the source of the product.

Service Providers

While the previous category of 'special businesses' were dominated by those catering to visitors and tourists, respondents in this group are largely concerned with the provision of services to the local community. In keeping with conventional wisdom, many of the respondents in this group are

locals, often owning long-established family businesses. John, whose father began their landscaping business 35 years ago, summed up the relationship between his business and the local environment well. When asked whether his location, in what is perceived to be a high quality environment, helped his business, he replied, "*No. I do my research, and we're not dealing with tourists here, we're dealing with locals*". John, emphasising the common perception that tourists are likely to be 'taken in' by such marketing ploys, while locals are immune to them, sees no reason to pursue this form of marketing. It wouldn't make sense to him and it wouldn't work with his customers. Although there might be the potential for this (the business includes a busy garden centre which attracts some passing trade from tourists) and some other similar businesses have pursued it, it is not appropriate to the form of John's business. John did attribute some of the business' success to the increasing number of holiday homes in the area. In the same way as all businesses in the area are reliant, either directly or indirectly, on the presence of tourists in the region, part of John's business relies on other people's perceptions of the environment as being one which is a good holiday destination. However, John was almost dismissive of this aspect of the business, describing work for tourists and visitors as "*the icing on the cake for us*". Certainly, it is not a market that he is willing to go out of his way to cater for: "*we do get the passing trade but predominantly we get locals using us again and again*".

Another provider of local services in the area is Margaret, who owns a substantial transport business. She holds the contract for providing school services, and public transport to smaller communities, as well as providing private hire cars and minibuses. Her product is very prosaic, and it is hard to see how any 'environmental value' could be attributed to it. Margaret herself is very aware of how highly the environment is valued in Highland Perthshire ("*It's very important to me, living here. And visitors are so impressed by it and seem to love it – beautiful countryside, it's quiet and away from all the hustle and bustle*"). Yet, the form of her business, and the product that she offers, is so 'ordinary' that it is not possible to attribute any 'special' value associated with environmental quality to it. However, Margaret's business is so well established and thriving that it is questionable whether she needs access to this source of 'added value'.

7.5.3 Summary of the Rural Enterprise Data

Having identified and outlined the primary categorization of the data, which splits the respondents businesses into two groups, it is appropriate at this point to summarise progress so far and to outline the remainder of the analysis and discussion.

Essentially, the respondents have been split into two primary categories, on the basis of their businesses. The nature of the differences of between the two groups, which have been labelled as being 'Environmental Enterprises' and 'Prosaic Enterprises', are summarised in Table 7.2 below.

Table 7.2 Differences between Environmental and Prosaic Enterprises

	Environmental Enterprises	**Prosaic Enterprises**
Source of Value	Environmental Cultural Aesthetic	Local connections Competitive advantage
Product Type	Advanced Experiential Cultural production & trading	Basic Conventional goods and services
Strategy	Commodification of intangible environmental values into tangible products and services Marketing an association between environmental quality and product / service quality Niche marketing	Promotion of local status: reliability, fair pricing, local services for local customers Exploitation of local networks to expand and develop the business
Business Advantage	Location in an environment of perceived high quality	Lack of competition, local presence
Form of Business	Non-traditional trading / service	Traditional trading / service
Market	National, International, (tourist)	Local (some tourist)

Having outlined the differences between the two categories in terms of the businesses that are found in each, it is now appropriate to attempt to link these apparent distinctions with the respondents themselves. That is, it appears that rural businesses can be distinguished on the basis of the use that they make of public perceptions of environmental quality. The aim now is to investigate more deeply the characteristics, motivations and actions of the entrepreneurs themselves. The 'Environmental' / 'Prosaic' categorisation has proven to be a useful framework on which to base a brief examination of rural businesses. The next step is to explore why individual entrepreneurs might choose to establish one kind of business or the other. The personal decision to exploit (or ignore / overlook) intangible environmental values might be deliberate, the result of careful consideration and planning, or it may not have been considered in the slightest, but in order

to develop a meaningful explanation for the phenomenon of rural environmental enterprise, it must be explored.

7.6 Exploring the Differences: Locals and In-migrants

As analysis and successive rounds of data collection proceeded, it became apparent that certain characteristics were shared by the owners of businesses found in the 'Environmental' and 'Prosaic' business groups. These shared characteristics seemed to be a matter of shared values and attitudes about life and the world, and also of common experiences and backgrounds. Respondents whose businesses fell into the 'environmental' category were by and large *incomers* to the study area, drawn by the opportunity to experience a rural lifestyle in aesthetically pleasing surroundings. They were often well-educated and their personal interests are apparent in the businesses that they are involved in. Many of these are creative enterprises, businesses that allow the respondent to express their creativity while making a living. Others are firmly based on the experiential, again allowing the entrepreneur to pursue their own recreational interests through their business. During the interviews, they expressed an interest in national, as well as local, issues, and several had become involved in local issues and activities. Contrastingly, the other respondents were a mixture of both locals (who had been born and lived in the study area) and incomers. The locals seemed to be a more parochial group, whose reference frame consisted of local events and people. Some were born and bred in the study area, and had become business owners through involvement in a long-standing family business. Often, the enterprises in which they were involved were of the prosaic kind – transport services and building supplies, grocers stores and other basic services.

Attitudes and values are notoriously difficult to define objectively, given their inherently subjective nature. Yet, these are exactly the motivating factors that have been seen to guide the actions of entrepreneurs. Examples from the data can provide explanations for the actions of the entrepreneurs in each group, which focus on their aspirations, their reasons for choosing to become entrepreneurs, and – most significantly in the context of this research – their own environmental values and the ways in which these are realized through their business choices. From the respondent group, pairs of similar businesses can be identified, one owned by a local and one by an in-migrant to the study area. Using comparative analysis, the differences between the

strategies and actions of the two groups of entrepreneurs can be identified and explored through their approaches to enterprise.

7.6.1 Manufacturing / Production in a Perceived High Quality Environment

The first examples are a pair of food processing enterprises, both smokeries located within the study area. They produce very similar products, and are of an age in business terms. One business is run by a local, and the other by an in-migrant to the region. Despite the superficial similarities of the businesses, the differences between the entrepreneurial strategies adopted by the two owners are revealing.

David, the owner of the smokery discussed previously, is an incomer to the study area, arriving with his family some years previously. His father actually started the business: "*he was stuck up on the estate during a long cold winter bored so he decided to try and build a smokery in an old shed he had up there. He had plenty of venison in the freezer so he just experimented with it through the winter, and in the spring he decided to try and make a go of it... as a business.*" David has taken over the business from his father, and runs it in a very effective manner, investing in top-of-the-range equipment and a custom built factory, and always looking to expand. He was shown to be very aware of the importance of the location of his business, seeing it as a key marketing tool to emphasise the environmental quality and traditional methods of production that make his product so popular, to the extent that he is willing to forgo opportunities to expand the business in order to remain in his current location.

George runs a similar business. A local farmer, he first diversified from sheep into deer farming and then constructed a smokery in some unused outbuildings on his farm, having observed the popularity of such high value products elsewhere. George has suffered many setbacks during the establishment of his business, including the costly requirement to bring the production facility up to EU hygiene standards, but he now runs a reasonably successful business supplying local hotels and shops with smoked products.

One of the key differences between the two businesses was the owners' apparent attitude towards the 'environment' in which they were located. During the interview, David immediately picked up on my questions relating to the potential of 'environmental marketing', while George did not. The

latter's responses to the same questions revealed a far narrower, parochial understanding of 'the environment': he referred to the state of the track leading to the farm ("*if people make it all the way up that they're bound to buy something!*") and other very local features, such as the recent vandalism of a bridge, and his concerns about the increasing number of "*towny day-trippers*" in the area. His perceptions of the environment were extremely 'local', and he did not subscribe to widely-held perceptions of the countryside as an 'idyll' or a 'reservoir of nature' to any great extent. Revealingly, and in contrast to David, the packaging he used for his products was strictly utilitarian, so much so that some of his retail customers had asked him to change it. Whereas David's products were beautifully packaged in cardboard wallets which feature symbols of the local environment (forests and lochs) and tartan imagery, George's consisted of clear plastic, with only a sticker denoting the name of the producer and other practical information. When I suggested to George that perhaps his buyers were keen to cash in on their customers perceptions of the environment and how this could be expressed through certain types of packaging, he grudgingly agreed, but was aggrieved that the quality of the product didn't speak for itself. Another contrast between the two businesses was identified in their attitudes to customers visiting the production facility. David was very keen to keep customers away from the site: there are no on-site sales facilities and a rather curt notice re-directs potential buyers away from his factory to the local village shop. George on the other hand, is quite happy for people to arrive in his farmyard (having braved the track), and buy directly from the fridge he keeps in his office. In fact, he has installed a window that allows customers to see his employees at work. He feels he has "*nothing to hide, up here*", and has no worries that the 'mystique' of the production process will be compromised: for George, there is no 'mystery' to preserve and, to a certain extent, his customers 'get what they see'. In fact, he is proud of the expensive, hi tech, stainless steel equipment and encourages visitors to admire it.

The above example demonstrates how two superficially similar businesses are guided by very different entrepreneurial strategies, which can in turn be explained in terms of their individual owners. While David, the young, privately-educated, incomer, takes every opportunity to exploit the intangible values inherent in his location, and recognized by his customers, George, the elderly local farmer, takes a much more prosaic view. He does not make reference to 'nature' or 'tradition' in his marketing, rather he emphasizes the efficient, up-to-date production process and sees quality as being a result of this, rather than using symbolic indicators to denote quality.

7.6.2 Rural Recreation – Experiential Products in a Rural Setting

The second comparative pair is that of Neil and Murdo, both of whom own mountain bike hire businesses. Both rent bikes to visitors and provide local cycling information, and both businesses have been categorized as 'environmental' given their reliance on the local environment as providing an appropriate setting for the service they offer. Neil, as outlined previously, has chosen to rent a shop in the main town in the study area, and supplements his hire business through bike sales and repairs. He is an incomer to the area, having moved in to the study area from Aberdeenshire. He is passionate in his motivation for starting the business as he firmly believes that recreational pursuits are the future for rural tourism: activity rather than accommodation focused. Like David, he is keenly aware of the value of the environment to his customers, most of whom are tourists. I observed him at work, passing on maps and information to his customers: in both the verbal and written information he provides, the emphasis is firmly on 'getting away from it all'. He directs his customers to locations where they are able to experience the remoteness of sparsely populated glens and woodlands, and specifically to places where they are unlikely to encounter gamekeepers or farmers. As a keen mountain biker, Neil does not approve of the current landownership regime as it restricts his access to several desirable locations.

Murdo comes from a very different background. He is resolutely local, having served as the local policeman for many years, prior to his retirement. He had no intention of starting a business, but after his wife died he found himself with a lot more time on his hands. At the same time, other small-scale developments in his village made him think that there might be something he could do to contribute. He offered to tidy up a small local park that had become overgrown, and with the permission of the local landowner he converted the small shed to be a storage space for his bikes. The first few he bought were second hand, but as the business has continued, and with the help of local funds, he has been able to not only replace the shed with a neat wooden building, he has built up his collection of bikes to about a dozen.

The differences between the two businesses might be explained by a number of factors: age (Neil is in his late twenties while Murdo is in his sixties), or personal experience of mountain biking, and how they have each come to their current position. However, it is interesting to compare them in terms of their attitudes to the value of the 'natural' environment, and specifically how each

entrepreneur seems to perceive that value. Neil has strongly held environmental values. He reflects some of the use values that were identified by the active cyclists in chapter 6: remoteness, wilderness and challenge, as indicating a 'high quality environment'. As outlined previously, he is aware of the history of the 'empty places', however he chooses to ignore this 'reality' in favour of his own construction of the 'natural' environment as a wilderness. Murdo on the other hand fits directly into the group that values the 'rural community' identified in chapter 6. His business makes a small profit, but his primary motivation is to provide another service to visitors, one that will benefit other businesses in his village, and to keep himself busy. The tour information he provides is more prosaic than Neil's, focusing on specific locations of local significance, and in almost all cases he has successfully negotiated access to the various routes with local landowners, through local networks of communication.

The differences between the two businesses above, again superficially similar, can be seen as reflective of many things. However, their respective positions as 'in-migrant' and 'local' certainly seem to inform some of these differences. Neil fits the profile of many young entrepreneurs moving to rural areas and starting successful businesses: he is strongly independent and highly motivated, his reference frame lies well beyond the confines of the local community, he has strong 'green' views, and his perception of the local environment is shaped by essentially an anti-urban, anti-development view of the 'wilderness' of Highland Perthshire. These values both drive and shape Neil's business, from the information he provides, to his marketing leaflets, which feature the scenic and challenging qualities of the local landscape. Murdo, on the other hand, is fairly ambivalent about mountain biking as an activity: the business allows him to achieve other objectives. He remains 'useful' and 'active' in his retired life. Despite being located in much the same place as Neil, and acknowledging that the local environment is vital to the success of his small enterprise, he is almost dismissive of the qualities that his customers seem to revere. The 'wilderness experience' *per* se is not important to him, but easily accessible cycle routes through local villages, are.

7.6.3 Local Service Providers

The final example that will be used to compare and contrast the businesses of locals and incomers is drawn from the prosaic businesses. Gordon is one of the biggest employers in the study group, employing up to 30 people in his building services enterprise. He is local, having first worked as an

apprentice within the study area, then as a self-employed builder. About 15 years ago he worked on a major building contract, which involved a degree of subcontracting, enjoyed the experience, and set up his own building services company. Greg also runs a building firm, of sorts. He has lived in the study area for about 5 years, having previously been employed as a civil servant. His decision to move was very much based on lifestyle choices: he and his wife made a conscious decision that they would move to the countryside, and both would work no more than part-time, in order to spend as much timed as possible with their children. Initially, Greg did seek employment when he moved, but found that there was a major lack of skilled employment opportunities in his field. When his mother retired to a house nearby, he fitted some cupboards for her, and was soon asked to do some similar work for a neighbour. He now runs a one-man business, specialising in renovation and restoration building projects. The popularity of such projects in the study area has ensured that Greg could now work full-time, if he wanted to.

One of the key contrasts between the businesses of Gordon and Greg, which relates to their perception of environmental quality, lies in their attitudes towards rural building projects. Gordon, the local, is utterly dismissive of the current "*craze for Victorian buildings out here [in the study area] – it's madness*". He feels that the current planning system, which aims to preserve such historic buildings in rural towns and villages, works against the needs of local communities, pointing out that the materials used – slate and dressed stone – are extremely expensive, and put building or restoration projects well beyond the financial reach of young local people. His own daughter has had to move to Perth with her three children as she cannot afford to buy a house near her parents. Gordon showed me a design of a house over which he and the owner are currently battling with the planning authorities, which is of an extremely modern design, and incorporates various energy-saving and environmentally friendly features. He summed up his feelings thus: "*it's just as well that these attitudes [to building] didn't get fossilised in the stone age rather than the Victorian – or we'd all be living in caves courtesy of the planning people and the preservation society*". It is interesting to compare his attitudes to those of Greg, whose entire business philosophy is based on the value of restoration and renovation of old properties, using traditional building materials. Greg, like many incomers to rural areas, highly values the 'traditional' and the 'natural' ways of rural life. He derives a high degree of satisfaction from his work, and has many clients among those who share his values: purchasers of older properties ranging from small lodge houses to grand estate houses, often incomers themselves. Although the attitudes of Greg and Gordon cannot be tied directly to

their perceptions of 'natural' environmental quality due to the prosaic nature of their businesses, the differences in their attitudes and the way they value aspect of 'tradition' and 'rurality' are very revealing. Greg seems to see his enterprise almost in terms of a craft business: profit is not his primary motivation, personal satisfaction from his restorations is. This is even replicated in the business name, which refers to the locality he serves, his interest in building 'crafts' and his logo comprises an artistic representation of a broadleaf tree. I asked Greg why he chose this logo, and he explained that he felt it reflected the beauty of the places he worked, and the rural nature of his business. These are very tenuous links to make, between environmental quality, tradition, rurality and the reality of building work. However, to Greg (and his customers) they make perfect sense. Gordon, on the other hand, reflects his local-ness and his rejection of such concepts by advertising his business in terms of convenience, a local workforce and local status as a longstanding and successful local businessman.

7.6.4 Exploring the Local / In-migrant Dimension in Rural Enterprise

The above observations demonstrate that rural entrepreneurs can be categorised as being *Locals* or *In-migrants* not only on the basis of their personal background but also in terms of their approach to enterprise. *In-migrant entrepreneurs* readily acknowledge the importance of perceived local environmental quality in their enterprise, both as it influences their customers and their own personal motivations. They widely subscribe to the notion that the 'rural idyll', and 'the rural environment' – however constructed – is an important factor in their decision to live and work in an area of perceived high environmental quality. *Local entrepreneurs* place far less emphasis on the socially constructed 'rural idyll' in their decision to live and work in the study area. Instead, a rural family background and local social networks influence their entrepreneurial strategies. They are focused on local communities, and generally do not seek to extend their businesses out with the local market.

The received wisdom of the literature holds that environmental-type enterprises tend to be favoured by in-migrants, and prosaic enterprises by local entrepreneurs. The profiles of the two groups tend to correlate, particularly along the lines of values and perceptions of value. In-migrants tend to have preconceived ideas about the rural environment, relating to quality of life and environmental quality: in theory they should be ideally placed to exploit intangible environmental values through a carefully marketed enterprise – as many of the respondents discussed above have indeed done.

Conversely, local entrepreneurs have a tendency to be more parochial in their outlook, and less likely to share the same perceptions of environmental value in relation to the 'rural idyll. Thus, they would not be expected to establish businesses based on the exploitation of values that they do not necessarily share. Certainly, all the local respondents in this survey acknowledged that they enjoyed living in the remote rural area, but their response was in terms of rural community, family roots and their own 'local identity' – not aesthetic value, or some inherent 'goodness' in the rural environment. In theory then, it may be possible to demonstrate an association enterprises and entrepreneurs as follows:

IN-MIGRANT ENTREPRENEUR => ENVIRONMENTAL ENTERPRISE

LOCAL ENTREPRENEUR => PROSAIC ENTERPRISE

Certainly, Anderson (1995) found that in terms of 'local' and 'cosmopolitan' entrepreneurs in remote Argyll, the above theory holds good. However, as table 7.3 below outlines this association was not found to be particularly strong in this current study. A very simple table, it shows that 'Environmental' businesses were frequently established by incomers to the study area, while only a few locals choose to establish this kind of business. Thus there does seem to be a strong correlation between 'Environmental' enterprises and in-migrants. However, there were many 'negative' cases: those that did not fit the expected association: a quarter of the environmental enterprises were actually established by locals. Furthermore, the expected correlation between 'locals' and 'prosaic' enterprises is even less apparent, as represented by the graph in figure 7.10, showing that two thirds of the prosaic enterprises encountered were being run by in-migrants.

It is possible to account for this in several ways, not least the general over-representation of in-migrants in the respondent group as a whole (32 of 50), a consequence of the non-representative sampling technique. It must be pointed out that the non-representative nature of the sampling scheme, and the small numbers of respondents means that the statistics in Table 7.3 are intended to be indicative of the findings only. Statistical tests on such as small data set would be meaningless, particularly in view of the rich qualitative data available. However, the variances from the expected results outlined above were considered to be so great, that they could not simply be dismissed as a result of the particular sampling scheme. During the interviews, it was very

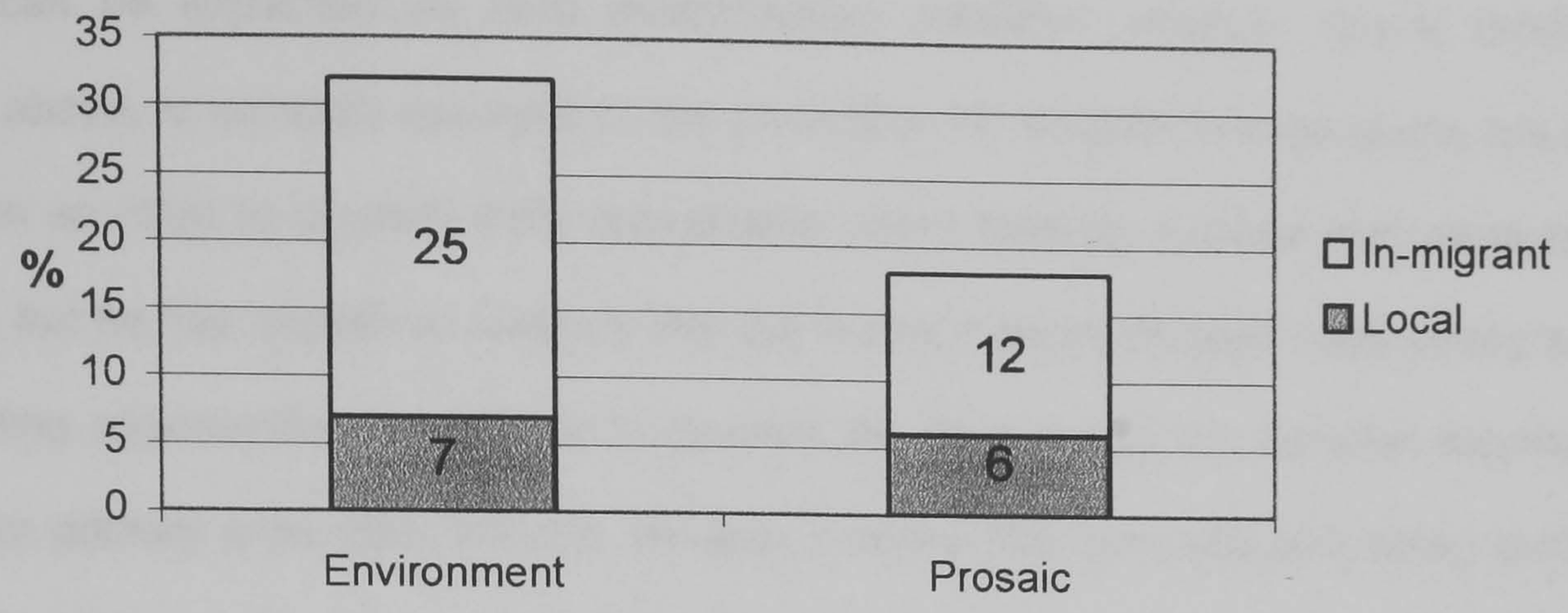
apparent that 'locals' and 'in-migrants; seemed to hold very different views about 'rurality', 'environmental quality' and these differences were expressed in their contrasting attitudes to their enterprises, as outlined in the paired samples outlined above where superficially similar enterprises were managed in very different ways by in-migrants and locals. Yet, in a number of cases, the actual businesses that were established seemed to contradict these observations, and those of Anderson (1995). That is, a few local entrepreneurs seemed to have established certain businesses that depended to a large extent on 'selling' the local environment – despite their apparent lack of empathy with such values. Similarly, a significant proportion of in-migrant respondents – all of whom strongly emphasised the importance of 'the rural idyll' and the quality of the Highland Perthshire environment in their decision to live in the study area – seemed to have established businesses which were prosaic in nature, and made no direct use of the 'environmental commodity' available to them. In order to fully develop the model a rural environmental enterprise, these unexpected cases need to be explained. Fortunately, the sample numbers are small enough that each case can be investigated individually, and further explanation for the unusual results can be sought, with a view to informing the wider research questions. This will be done in some detail for the unusual results outlined in table 7.3, seeking explanations that will contribute to the development of a fuller explanatory model of environmental enterprise in a perceived high quality environment. Figure 7.10 demonstrates graphically the distribution of in-migrants / locals in the two forms of enterprise demonstrated by the respondents (environmental and prosaic).

Table 7.3 Cross-tabulating Enterprise Forms and Entrepreneurs

	Environmental Enterprises (32)	**Prosaic Enterprises (18)**
Incomers (36)	75% Of 32 environmental businesses, 24 were established by incomers	66% Of 18 prosaic businesses 12 were run by incomers
Locals (14)	25% Of 32 environmental businesses 8 were run by locals	34% Of 18 prosaic businesses 6 were run by locals

Unexpected cases

Figure 7.10 Environmental / Prosaic Enterprises and In-migrant / Local Entrepreneurs



7.6.5 Tales of the Unexpected: exploring the negative cases

Table 7.4 below lists the various respondents that did not fall into the expected categories outlined previously. The section below analyses these particular cases in some detail, seeking explanations for the unexpected results in order to test the explanatory themes developed above. The aim is to understand why these respondents do not fit into the theoretical framework developed previously, which associates environmental enterprises with in-migrants, and prosaic enterprises with locals.

Table 7.4 Unexpected Cases of Prosaic & Environmental Enterprise

	Name	Business	Environmental / Prosaic	Local / Incomer
1	Eileen	Campsite	Environmental	Local
2	Susan	Organic farm shop	Environmental	Local
3	Andrew	Deer farm / campsite	Environmental	Local
4	Colin	Boat trips / hire	Environmental	Local
5	Murdo	Mountain bike hire	Environmental	Local
6	Bill	Wildlife tour guide	Environmental	Local
7	George	Smokery	Environmental	Local
8	Sarah	Training consultancy	Prosaic	In-migrant
9	Greg	House crafts / Restoration	Prosaic	In-migrant
10	Jean	2nd hand bookshop	Prosaic	In-migrant
11	Elisa	Grocery store	Prosaic	In-migrant
12	Richard	Computer / IT services	Prosaic	In-migrant
13	Dave	Grocery Store	Prosaic	In-migrant
14	Beth	Cooking agency	Prosaic	In-migrant
15	Joy	Shiatsu therapy	Prosaic	In-migrant
16	Norman	Media consultancy	Prosaic	In-migrant
17	Allan	Post office, tea room, store	Prosaic	In-migrant
18	Doreen	Environmental consultancy	Prosaic	In-migrant
19	Tim	Project management consultant	Prosaic	In-migrant

Locals Entrepreneurs & Environmental Enterprises

There were a total of 8 locals whose businesses appeared to fall into the environmental category, 5 of which can be explained as farm diversification schemes. George, whose business was discussed above, is currently engaged in the production of smoked food products, his enterprise emerging in an effort to diversify from unprofitable sheep farming. Andrew also owns and runs a deer farm, but he has chosen to diversify into the tourist industry through establishing a campsite and providing opportunities for visitors to observe the deer during the summer months. He has moved from primary production into the services industry: the campsite and letting cottages now provide more income than the deer farming aspects of the business, much to Andrew's personal dismay as he derives a higher degree of satisfaction and enjoyment from that aspect of the business. Susan's farm shop is also a vital part of the overall farming business, as it provides an outlet for the organic lamb produced by her husband's family farm. Susan also has – unusually among the local respondents – completed an HND in Conservation Management at a local college, making her more aware than most locals of the importance of environmental values and quality. She revealed in the interview that the course made her feel, "*there must be something that I could do up here, with all this around me*". Eileen's business, a very successful caravanning and camping site, was actually established by her farming parents, as an alternative to farming, which was becoming increasingly unprofitable for them. In each of these cases, the respondents reported being almost forced into becoming entrepreneurs by the reducing incomes from traditional farming activities. Because of the difficulties of access to other farms, as outlined previously, it was not possible to compare the data of these respondents with farmers who had not chosen to diversify in such a way (and this is probably a suitable subject for another thesis entirely). In a way, it is not surprising that farmers become environmental entrepreneurs, as the 'natural environment' is already their workplace. Through their farming activities have acquired skills and knowledge that can be exploited in other ways. In each of the above businesses, agricultural production remains an important element: the enterprising action is the diversification into an activity that makes use of a resource they are familiar with, and - importantly – have ready access to. Thus, farmers and other landowners are somewhat uniquely placed to exploit 'environmental values' through diversification schemes. They may not necessarily share the values of those who come to use their services (witness Andrew's disapproval that he has to resort to 'deer petting' sessions to maintain an income).

Bill is also somewhat uniquely placed to utilize his existing skills and contacts in an entrepreneurial way. He is a retired gamekeeper who now leads mountain walks and acts as a guide for visitors. Again, he has specialist and detailed knowledge of the local area through his previous employment, and now uses them in a business that is part hobby, part profit. He is also able to access areas that are 'off limits; to others, by virtue of his continuing friendly relationship with his previous employers. This is of great benefit to his business. Despite the importance of the surrounding environment to his business, Bill does not use this in his marketing, such as it is. He has a very 'local' attitude to such matters, and relies on word of mouth to publicise his services.

Finally, Colin and his brother are locals who have taken over their fathers' long established boating business, hiring boats to visitors and organising fishing trips in a scenic loch, and admit that their continued success depends on the quality of the environment being maintained. However, like most locals their personal construction of the rural environmental revolves around their long-standing roots in the local community and specifically their status as a successful local business. They were almost reluctant to admit their dependence on the perceived quality of the environment. However, their involvement in an environmental enterprise can be explained in terms of family background and history. Their father was in fact a carpenter by trade, with a particular interest in building boats: "*we grew up in and out of boats all day, helping in the yard and messing around ...*" said David. He also revealed that the nature of the business had changed in recent years. "*There's very little actual building work here now, mostly it's repairs that we do, and the boats themselves are much more modern. Since the ******** opened [major tourist complex on the lochside], they've been sending people over to just hire boats for the day, so we do a lot more of that now. Fishing as well that's popular with the visitors.*" So in its original incarnation, the business was founded as a much more prosaic enterprise – carpentry and boat building. It is only with the expansion of the tourist market in the area that the business has become more directly 'environmental', in that it now relies heavily on the perceived quality of the environment to attract customers.

Thus, the unexpected finding that some local entrepreneurs have opted for businesses that exploit environmental value can be explained as either the result of unique skills and resources (farm diversification and wildlife tours), or as a desire to continue a well-established family business, and adapting it to changing rural circumstances.

In-migrant Entrepreneurs & Prosaic Enterprises

Some businesses owned by incomers were allocated to the prosaic category by virtue of the respondents' answer to the question 'would your business survive if it was located in a different environment – perhaps one of 'low' quality?' Where the respondent answered 'yes', and in the absence of any other reason to allocate it to the 'environmental enterprise' category, it was placed in the 'prosaic enterprise' category, even where the allocation was somewhat questionable. A good example of this is Beth, who owns a cooking and domestic service agency, supplying domestic staff to various functions and events within the study area and beyond. In a way, she relies heavily on tourism in the local area, and thus indirectly on perceived environmental quality. However, her business was already established before she moved to a remote farmhouse in Highland Perthshire, when she married a local farmer. In fact, she had previously operated a similar business in London and Edinburgh before moving to Perthshire: it seems apparent that the local environment is not too important to her business success. Beth falls into the category of *professional service providers* who have chosen to locate themselves in rural areas for lifestyle reasons. They do not need to rely on environmental – or any other spurious marketing ploy – to make a success of their business. The closest that Beth could come to such a strategy is when she's on the phone to a client, and they "*hear a lamb bleating outside the window and go awww, they seem to like that*". However, bleating lambs aside, the appeal is not such that Beth chooses to exploit it. In such businesses the services provided by the professional is the 'product', so to speak. Even businesses that might be expected to make some use of the perceived environmental quality may not. Doreen is an environmental consultant, living and working in one of the most remote glens of the study area. As someone working so closely with environmental quality issues, it might be expected that she makes some allusion to this in her business, perhaps suggesting that she has a superior understanding of such issues compared to someone who is based in a city – yet she does not. She said, "*I suppose some people might think that… but really I could run this business from anywhere. It's my professional knowledge that people are buying – the fact I live up here doesn't really come into it. I used to live in Edinburgh and I did much the same work down there as I do up here*". So for Doreen, as for the other professional service providers, the quality of the environment is of little consequence to their business. Overall, these professionals had certain skills which they could market anywhere – architects, project management consultants, media consultants – but they choose to live in Highland Perthshire for lifestyle and personal reasons. This was the same for both

locals and in-migrants. Beth, Doreen, Richard (computer services), Tim (project management), Greg (building restoration), Sarah (training and education services), Joy (Shiatsu massage) and Norman (media consultancy) are all examples of professionals who have moved to the study area, bringing their skills with them. By virtue of these skills they have been able to set up businesses that allow them to enjoy a rural lifestyle, without the need to exploit their location in any way. The same holds for the local professionals such as Andrew, a local architect who had taken over his father's practice. He agreed that he could have chosen to join or set-up a practice in a city, but he had no desire to: "*It depends what lifestyle you want to have…where I live I can go salmon fishing, trout fishing, play gold, go walking – there aren't many places you could do that*". For these professionals, living in place that offers a high quality of life (whatever that means) is their first priority. By virtue of their professional skills, they are able to locate themselves in such a place.

The professional services sector accounts for the majority of the incomers who have been allocated to the prosaic enterprises group. The remaining negative cases can also be examined to provide a deeper understanding of entrepreneurial motivation, and to account for why they might have opted to operate a prosaic business. Three incomer respondents had bought existing village grocery stores, all of which were basic in nature. Allan's business is located in one of the most remote glens in the study area. His business comprises a sub-post office, a few shelves of groceries and a very basic teashop that caters to tourists. I'd been advised to speak with Allan by another respondent, who told me that in his previous life Allan had owned and managed an award-winning restaurant on the Royal Mile, Edinburgh, as well as two coffee bars, also in the capital city. The mystery deepened when I actually met Allan. He described himself as a serial entrepreneur, having also set up and operated businesses in Australia and South Africa prior to coming to Scotland. He exhibited various incomer characteristics – a deep appreciation of the natural environment and wildlife, and the benefits of a rural lifestyle for his children, a strongly anti-urban attitude, a passion for outdoor recreation, and – more uniquely – a mission to establish "*the revolutionary free state of Glen* ****" in order to wrest control of the land from the current landowner. Why then, was such a dynamic, high achieving individual operating a tiny business such as this, particularly when he was still full of enthusiasm for his previous successes? It turned out that Allan saw this business very much as a stepping stone towards achieving his true goal – which is to develop "*a much bigger enterprise, probably something… to be based on the environment up here…there's so much potential for that kind of thing it's just getting it going*". Allan

saw the small, very prosaic business in which he is currently engaged as something to keep him ticking over while exploring the opportunities to develop another enterprise, to familiarise himself with the local community and local politics. Although he wasn't keen to go into details, he was very clear that this new enterprise would be focused strongly on the environmental resources at his disposal in Highland Perthshire, and that his market would be tourists and visitors to the area. Thus, Allan's next business is very likely to be an environmental enterprise – one that fits much more closely with his own values and perceptions of the remote rural area that he has chosen to make his home.

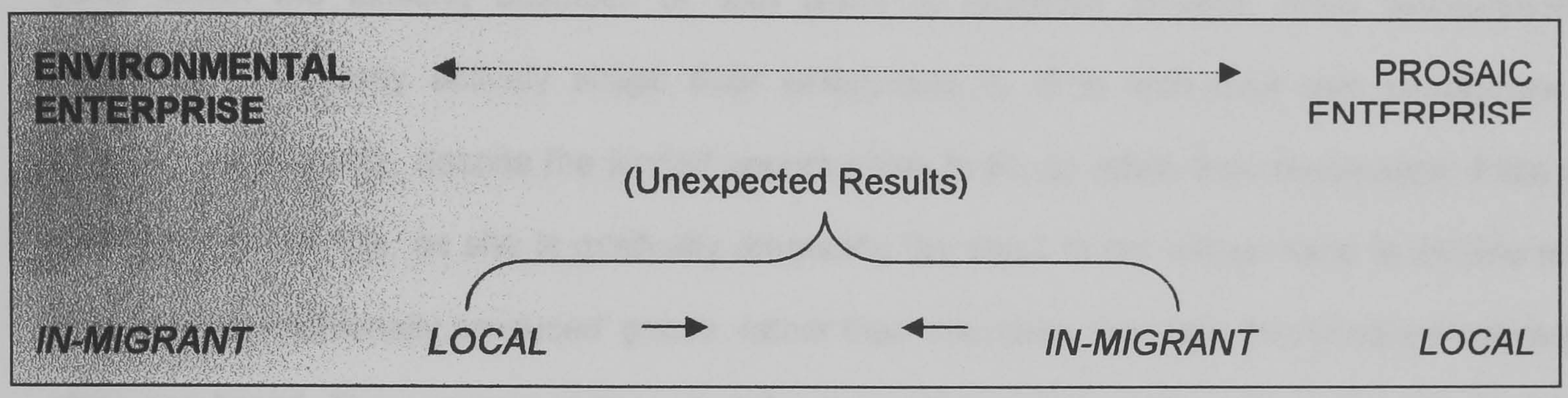
Another respondent in this sub-group was Eliza. She and her husband had holidayed in a Perthshire village for many years (as had Allan), and they had harboured dreams of moving there to live. Again, they were consciously rejecting their previous urban lifestyle ("*all the pollution and broken pavements and roads in Birmingham... we just couldn't stand all the noise any more*"). Neither had any experience in running a small grocery store, and it was proving to be very much a learning experience for both. Interestingly, Eliza's store was the closest to a delicatessen that I encountered in a small village – she had made a real effort to move away from the standard range of Co-op goods, to include various locally-produced food and drink lines, which were proving popular with her seasonal tourist customers. However, at heart the business remains a local store. I pressed Eliza for details on what had prompted her to pick this kind of business. She revealed that in fact, she and her husband had been in negotiations to purchase a run-down hotel in the village, but the building had inconveniently burnt down, and they were forced to either wait for another such opportunity to arise (unlikely considering the limited opportunities in the village) or to look for an alternative. The opportunity to purchase the shop arose, and they took it. Thus, Eliza's previous choice of business, a small rural hotel, would have fallen firmly into the category of Environmental enterprise, as the term is being used in this context. As such, she is now an incomer in charge of a prosaic business – but one that she is slowly modifying to reflect her own tastes and values.

The remaining anomaly is Jean, who was discussed previously: she runs a second-hand bookshop that she described as an "*altruistic community venture*". Her primary motivation is to provide employment for locals and an activity for tourists, rather than make a profit. Importantly, the business for Jean is more of a hobby: in her 'real life' she is a management consultant, able – like

the other professional service providers – to work from a remote rural area by virtue of her skills and ITC technology. Jean is an unusual case because the bookshop does not need to be profitable, and therefore she is free to shape the business according to her own interests and values. She recognizes the value of the environment as a resource for others, but chooses not to exploit it as the current form of the business suits her interests (local history) more appropriately

Diagram 7.2 below provides a diagrammatic representation of how the unexpected and unusual cases fit into the explanatory theory of environmental enterprise / in-migrant entrepreneur and prosaic enterprise / local entrepreneur.

Diagram 7.2 A typology of rural enterprise and local / in-migrant entrepreneurs



It describes the distribution of locals and in-migrants with respect to the nature of their enterprises, environmental or prosaic. The diagram shows the division between 'environmental' and 'prosaic' businesses as a scale rather than a definitive split, reflecting the difficulties in assigning a business definitively to one category or another, and the location of in-migrant and local entrepreneurs on this scale. At either end of the scale, the various respondents and their businesses are easy to classify. Businesses like David's smokery, and Neil's bike hire are easy to categorise as 'environmental enterprises': both the form of the business and the in-migrant owners' values fit well into this category. The same can be said of Gordon's construction company or Margaret's transport services: prosaic enterprises established and run by local people. These businesses really provided the 'standard' against which the negative cases could be analysed further, to seek explanation for their apparent deviation from the accepted theory.

Respondents falling into the centre of the scale are less easy to classify, and comprise the 'unexpected cases' discussed above. They indicate, perhaps, that the categorisation of enterprises as 'environmental' or prosaic' exists on a continuum, rather than a strict 'either / or' categorisation.

The examples outlined above show that locals too can establish 'environmental enterprises' – though their entrepreneurial strategies are often very different, a result of their 'local' attitudes towards constructs such as the 'natural environment' or the 'rural idyll'. This is reflected in the diagram, showing that local entrepreneurs running environmental enterprises tend towards similar views and strategies as other locals, running prosaic enterprises. They tend to play down or not even recognise the importance of perceived environmental quality in their enterprise, and are far less likely to actively exploit such values in their enterprises.

Prosaic businesses are established and run by both in-migrants and locals. Yet, as the paired examples outlined above show, in-migrants who find themselves establishing a prosaic enterprise demonstrate a tendency to move towards 'environmental enterprise' strategies in their businesses, either within the existing business or with plans to establish another, more 'environmental' enterprise. They may actively shape their enterprises to fit in with their own perceptions of environmental quality, despite the limited opportunities to do so within their businesses: Eliza is a good example of this, as she is gradually amending the stock in her village store to include more 'high quality, traditionally produced' goods, rather than the rather mundane tins of baked beans and white pan bread. The example of Greg and Gordon outlined above, shows how superficially similar prosaic businesses are in fact very different enterprises. Greg in engaged in a very prosaic business – building services. Yet, through careful marketing of environmental values, and associations with 'tradition' and 'heritage' Greg is operating his 'prosaic' enterprise in an 'environmental' way. Allan is an example of an in-migrant with a very prosaic business – but he has 'big plans' to move on and establish a tourist venture of some sort, based heavily on the environment at his disposal.

Table 7.5 below sums up the analysis of the unexpected cases, in terms of the individual respondents reasons for choosing or being able to establish an unexpected type of business.

Table 7.5 Explaining the Unexpected Cases

Unexpected Case	Explanation	Entrepreneurial Strategy
Environmental enterprise & local entrepreneur	Farm diversification enterprise	Exploitation of land resource and personal knowledge in enterprise
	'Cosmopolitan' experience e.g. higher education in conservation	Application of specialist knowledge to the business
	Family business inherited by current respondent	Modification of business to fit with changing circumstances
Prosaic enterprise & In-migrant entrepreneur	Professional service providers	Ability to conduct business irrespective of location through extensive use of ICT
	Intention was / is to establish an environmental enterprise	To modify and develop the current business to encompass personal environmental values To establish a new enterprise that will exploit environmental values

Having explored the data thoroughly, and accounted for many of the variations and unexpected cases that have arisen, the aim now is to develop more abstract explanatory theories to account for the action of the respondents, and the complex links between perceived environmental value, business location and business form.

7.7 A Model Of Environmental Enterprise In A Perceived High Quality 'Natural' Environment

7.7.1 Introduction

Environmental values are complex, essentially contested, as are all value judgements, and difficult to pinpoint. The quality of an 'environment' can be defined in a myriad of ways, many of which take their meaning from traditionally positivistic methods of science – ecological value, pollution monitoring, landscape evaluation, for example. These methods have the advantage of apparent precision and rigor, and are generally straightforward both to research and report. Yet, we can ask 'do these 'measurements' reflect the values of 'ordinary people'?' Increasingly, it appears that they do not. The criteria by which 'professionals' and 'ordinary people' evaluate the quality of the environment have been shown to be highly disparate, the latter focusing much more strongly on social constructions of the 'natural' environment, than statistics or score cards. For this reason, it was decided that this current study would not focus exclusively on particular places that have been identified as being of 'high quality' by environmental professionals. Nature reserves, SSSIs, Special Protected Areas have all been identified as being of 'high quality' in ecological terms, yet there is little indication that 'ordinary people' share the opinion of ecologists. Thus, in chapter 6, an attempt was made to uncover social constructions of environmental quality, to identify how people value

environments, and on what basis. The findings outlined in that chapter indicate that *use value* is the crucial determinant of perceived environmental quality. In short, people evaluate environments on the basis of how well it satisfies their personal use of that environment. Various categories of use were identified and the important criteria within each were explored. Importantly, social constructions of environmental quality were shown to be much wider and 'fuzzier' than scientific approaches allowed. They were more difficult to identify, and highlighted the inappropriateness of using a single definition in identifying a 'high quality natural environment'. Such environments were directly associated with 'the rural' as a "reservoir of the natural" (Anderson 2000: 140).

Rural areas have been shown to be undergoing many changes at present. One of the observed changes that is highly relevant in the context of this research is their apparent transition from areas of production to *zones of consumption*. The 'countryside ideal' increasingly provides a resource of sorts, to be exploited by new rural enterprises, which supply post-modern products to increasingly specialised markets. People visit the countryside in increasing numbers to partake of opportunities to 'consume rurality', in the form of symbolic good and services. Bunce (1994) describes these as tangible expressions of pre-industrial commodities. Bryden & Munro (2000) highlight the intangible nature of the values that underpin the production of such tangible symbols. It appears that the key to enterprise in the post-modern rural economy is not the primary production activities of the past, but post-modern commodification of the rural environment and the values apparent therein: nature and naturalness, wilderness, remoteness, tradition and heritage for example. As the establishment of small businesses, associated in particular with the in-migration of people to rural areas, plays an increasingly important role in rural economies, we need to understand in more detail what these new rural entrepreneurs do, and why. The phenomenon of enterprise has been shown to be undefined (and perhaps indefinable). Despite the attempts of many academic disciplines to understand entrepreneurship, it seems that none can fully account for the phenomenon. However, at an abstract level it was possible to describe enterprise as *the creation and extraction of value from environments*.

The primary aim of this chapter has been to explore the phenomenon of rural enterprise in the context of socially constructed perceptions of environmental quality. Having observed the wider-reaching cultural shifts that have produced profound changes in rural areas, we need to examine the actions of rural entrepreneurs within the new post-modern paradigm produced by these

changes. The social process of enterprise can only be understood through analysis of the actions of rural entrepreneurs, specifically those who are currently exploiting the aforementioned changes. In the context of this study, this refers to the environmental entrepreneurs – those who make a living through the recognition, commodification and marketing of previously intangible environmental values. The complexity and variation inherent in small rural enterprises has also been noted: businesses can be described as being *environmental* enterprises or as *prosaic enterprises*, while entrepreneurs themselves can be characterised as *locals* or *in-migrants*, a reflection of both their personal circumstances and their attitudes to enterprise. The variation in the respondents and their businesses has been largely accounted for through the seeking of deeper understanding of the negative or unexpected cases. Of greater interest at this point are the actions of the *environmental entrepreneurs* by virtue of the link between their entrepreneurial strategy and the perceived quality of the 'natural' environment. The prosaic enterprises have acted as a useful comparison to these businesses, acting as negative cases, allowing the constant comparison of data. The model that has emerged, however, focuses on the action of *environmental entrepreneurs* acting in a rural context.

From the analysis of the respondents, there seem to be two elements in the process of environmental enterprise:

1. Environmental entrepreneurs are able to recognise the existence of certain rural / environmental values, both in their own world-view, and in that of wider society – their potential market. They share many widely-reported socially constructed notions of environmental quality: aesthetic beauty, 'wilderness', remoteness, naturalness, the 'rural idyll' and uniqueness were all identified by the respondents in their description of the study area as a 'high quality natural environment'. The respondents recognised and shared these values, frequently to the extent that their decision to live in the study area was totally informed by them. This ties closely into an idea introduced in the previous chapter, that of 'use value' as an indicator of value. Where certain aspects of an environment are recognised widely as signifiers of 'quality' or 'naturalness' there exists an opportunity for potential exploitation of these by entrepreneurs.
2. Environmental entrepreneurs are able to shape these values into a business opportunity. In many cases, their entrepreneurial strategy focused on the exploitation of the

environmental values listed above. In a variety of ways – many of which were outlined in the case studies presented above – the entrepreneurs were able to commodify the environmental values they held into a recognisable, tangible product or service. The way in which this commodification took place has been shown to vary between different businesses and sectors, but the abstract explanation for the entrepreneur's actions remain the same.

From the analysis of the data it is possible to create a model that encapsulates the process of environmental enterprise in a remote rural context. Specifically, the concept of *values* can be used to explain the actions of the environmental entrepreneurs discussed previously. Again, it is important to note the immense variety in the form of rural enterprise: the very variation that makes the field of rural enterprise such a dynamic and stimulating field of study provides major obstacles to the development of models that account for all aspects of the phenomenon. Nonetheless, using the field data as a primary resource, and the pre-understanding gleaned from the literature, the following model is intended to capture the essence of the process of environmental enterprise in the context of perceived high quality 'natural' environments.

7.7.2 The Model

Environmental enterprise in a rural context is a socio-economic phenomenon that arises from the individuals' ability to recognise, commodify and market intangible environmental values. The environment from which the values are extracted comprises the rural milieu in which the entrepreneur operates. The personal values of the entrepreneur (social, economic, environmental) allow the individual to recognise the opportunities for the extraction of such values from the rural milieu. Shared values between entrepreneur and market allow these values to be commodified in a suitable tangible form (product or service) and marketed in an appropriate way. The form of the product or service is frequently post-modern: sign-value takes precedence over use-value. The realisation of these personal values, along with other assets (financial assets, skills and abilities) makes environmental enterprises inherently subjective, varying with the values of the individual.

The model was developed from the data presented previously in this chapter, which was analysed using constant comparison and negative sampling techniques. Specifically, appropriate areas of interest were first identified, and then the data was probed more deeply to ensure the closest analytical 'fit'. The conceptual model was then developed from these explorations, and further evidence will be outlined below, to support the various themes combined in the model. As was pointed out in chapter 5, there is no easy way to 'prove' that the model is 'true': at best, the various elements of the model can be deconstructed and examined individually in the context of the evidence (data) to support the findings. It is for the reader to be convinced of the validity and precision of the findings, in the context of their own experience and understanding.

7.7.3 Deconstructing the Model: exploring the evidence

In this section, the various elements of the model will be outlined and evidence form the data provided in order to support the overall model as a generalisation of the process of environmental enterprise.

Environmental enterprise in a rural context is a socio-economic phenomenon

The literature review demonstrated that rural enterprise can be seen as an essentially social phenomenon – hence the academic difficulties in trying to develop a definitive explanation or description of it. For many of the respondents, certainly, economic success was not their first priority: they sought to achieve certain personal goals through their enterprise. Laura and her husband, both potters, established a successful pottery and sales room in a small town within the study area. The business grew over the years to the extent that they had to employ several other people to undertake the more laborious aspects of the production and sales work as well as move to larger premises to house their employees. Eventually it became too much for them, "*we didn't start this business to become managers... of people. We started it because we are artists and basically we wanted to make pots... It takes so much time you wouldn't believe how much time to manage even just a few employees all the paperwork... it got to the stage where we were sitting up all night through the night to keep an eye on the kiln because it was going twenty-four hours a day*". When I interviewed Laura, she and her husband had sold their premises, disbanded their workforce, and moved away from the town to a smaller village, where they were once again making and selling pots and photographic work, but strictly as a cottage enterprise. They had no intention of "*letting it all run away from [them] again*". This attitude came through very strongly for many

respondents: that quality of life was more important than economic success. Their objectives in starting the business were not to create an empire, but rather to achieve a certain lifestyle. They may not have gone to the extent of actively seeking an unprofitable venture, but above a certain level profit was not the main objective.

Another good example of the interplay between the economic and the social aspects of enterprise in that of outdoor recreation providers. Neil (mountain bike hire), Roddy (white water rafting) and Jack (scuba diving school) were all highly enthusiastic about their enterprises, not least because it provided an opportunity for them to pursue their own passions. They all got a 'buzz' out of being able to take their 'hobby' and turn it into a business. Additionally, and this applied to some other respondents, they also enjoyed the 'teaching' aspects of the business, and the 'expert' status that this conferred upon them. Jack told me, "*as I've been here a few years now all the local tourist places are getting to know me... they know that they can send people visitors or whatever and they'll have a good time... even the big water sports centre at ***** sends groups of children along to me because they know I'm the only person offering this service in the area – you'd have to go to Fort William to get diving training otherwise*". Henry is a writer and researcher who runs a small enterprise that offers guided tours of the various spiritual and pagan religious sites in the study area, a subject he has written several books and articles on. He said, "*it makes a real difference being able to live among the sites that I am writing about, and I think my readers like it too. Certainly, I am getting more and more people phoning up and asking me to do talks in the local area, which I really enjoy and it's good publicity of course*".

Environmental enterprise... arises from the individual's ability to recognise, commodify and market intangible environmental values.

In many ways this really represents the 'meat and bones' of environmental enterprise. This is the basis on which environmental enterprises were differentiated from prosaic enterprises, previously and is what really distinguishes them. The 'values' referred to are familiar: nature and naturalness, rurality, the rural idyll, wilderness. As outlined in the previous chapter, social indicators of environmental quality can act as signifiers, which in turn provide opportunities for enterprise, where the form of the enterprise can be shaped around these notions. What environmental entrepreneurs essentially do is make intangible values available for consumption in a variety of forms. These intangible values are frequently signifiers of 'quality' or 'value' as identified in the previous chapter.

Examples from the manufacturing, retail and tourism sectors were presented and discussed in some detail, and some more examples can be given here. Helen, whose business comprises a working smithy and a sales room, produces artistic metalwork, while her husband (a time-served blacksmith) carries on with more traditional work. It is interesting to note in passing that Helen's creations are a far more lucrative product than her husbands' traditional skills. The smithy itself is very traditional – black with soot and absolutely filthy – and the sales room comprises a whitewashed stone outbuilding with some simple shelves. None of Helen's products are particularly functional: they are largely decorative. Despite being relatively expensive, they sell well and the business is a success. A regular customer of Helen's appeared while I was interviewing her, and he enthused about a life-size sculpture he had recently purchased from her, "*it's wonderful to see this old smithy still going strong, there are hardly any left in the countryside you know and it's important that these skills are kept alive*". Thus, Helen's products can be seen as icons of rurality, of the 'traditional order' that is maintained in the countryside. It doesn't seem to matter to Helen's customers that her husbands' more practical (and traditional) skills are in decreasing demand, that Helen is English and a trained sculptress. Helen draws on certain aspects of the social construction of rurality and the countryside, she appeals to the consumers desire for symbols of tradition, heritage and rural history, and incorporates them into her business. Through this commodification of rural values, she is selling symbols of the countryside, to a market that is increasingly eager to buy into this construction.

Another, more overtly 'environmental', example is that of Robert, a wildlife artist. He has his studio at home – a large, ramshackle house, with a view over the hills and lochs. He does not have a gallery, as such, and is happy for people to visit him in the large, sun-lit room in which he paints. His subject matter is almost exclusively wildlife and landscape, drawn from his surroundings. He said of his customers, "*it makes a real difference for them, they love being able to come here and see paintings of the places and animals that they have seen during their holiday*". Mostly Robert sells cheaper prints of his originals, as keepsakes for tourists. He admits freely that his work is an idealisation of what actually exists in the region: very few tourists will actually see a golden eagle or a stag at bay. Yet these are the images that represent the Highland environment, along with epic wilderness landscapes and histories castles. Robert is most definitely in the business of selling icons of 'naturalness', providing an image that his customers can hang on their walls as symbol of

their encounter with this particular 'natural environment', signifying that they themselves recognise and value these aspects of the natural environment.

The environment from which the values are extracted comprises the rural milieu in which the entrepreneur operates.

It was noted previously that in social constructions of rurality, certain aspects of the 'natural environment' are an important factor: rurality as a 'reservoir of the natural'. This is basically why a remote rural study area was selected to examine environmental enterprise in the context of perceived environmental quality: the respondents revealed that rural environments are widely considered to be of 'higher quality' than urban ones: in essence, "Town, Bad; Country, Good" (Blishen 1984). Thus, in focusing on the 'rural milieu' we are also directing our attention towards 'high quality environments'. This was demonstrated in chapter 6 as well; social constructions of environmental quality focus on many sources of intangible value that are perceived to exist in 'high quality rural 'natural' environments'. For all the entrepreneurs in this study, the environment in which they had located their business was perceived to encompass many, if not all, of the values outlined previously. Thus, the environmental values that they sought to commodify within their enterprises were also drawn from this milieu. The existence of certain key elements in a particular locality or landscape – such as scenic mountain and loch areas, small picturesque villages, native wildlife – signify to the onlooker that this particular locality is of 'high quality', and by incorporating and actively marketing on the basis of these important signifiers, an entrepreneur is able to take advantage of the opportunities presented by their location within the rural milieu.

An example can help clarify this point. Fay, a designer of textiles and leather goods, had developed an enterprise that involved designing, manufacturing and retailing luxury leather and cashmere goods, in a small village in the study area. She fits well into the profile of an in-migrant, drawn to the area by the prospect of a rural lifestyle, and the scenic beauty, remoteness and grandeur of the landscape. Interestingly, Fay had recently established a second outlet for her goods – in Edinburgh. Thus, we were able to compare the two businesses and explore what made the rural one 'special'. Fay said, "*it just seems to fit so well, the products being such traditional materials – cashmere and leather – and very Scottish too. Coming to live here in ****** was inspirational in a way, for me as a designer being surrounded by all this beauty and the natural colours that change with the seasons, they very much led to the development of my first products*". She also said "*I*

definitely emphasise the natural origins of my products the materials and the fact that they are produced in the local area – it all appeals to my customers. I have a display case now at one of the bigger hotels, and they often send guests to me who are looking for something a bit special as a gift or a souvenirs". Thus Fay draws directly on the aspects of the 'natural' environment that she values in her business strategy, emphasising '(environmental) quality' and '(environmental) integrity' through careful marketing. Her Edinburgh business *"is a completely different proposition – it's classy, it's much sleeker and... it has to be a different business because it's appealing to a completely different kind of market, and in a different place"*. Fay acknowledges that although the products are essentially the same in both businesses, she undertakes each enterprise in a very different way: one draws on the intangible values inherent in a perceived high quality 'natural' environment, while the other does not. For the environmental entrepreneurs operating in Highland Perthshire, their perceptions of the high quality 'natural' rural environment provide the value frame on which their businesses are based.

The personal values of the entrepreneur allow the individual to recognise the opportunities for extraction of such values from the rural milieu. Shared values between the entrepreneur and the market allow these values to be commodified in a suitable tangible form and marketed in an appropriate way.

One of the keys to environmental enterprise is the ability of the entrepreneur to not only recognise what they, themselves, value in the environment, but to also recognise that other people are likely to value the same, or similar, things. Thus, successful environmental enterprise depends to a large extent on the ability of the entrepreneur to recognise the opportunities inherent in their location through the exploitation of certain images and signifying symbols, aspects of a 'natural' environment that are recognised by both entrepreneur and customer.

A negative case can be used to support this idea. Richard is an in-migrant, who has established an IT services company in the study area, offering email and fax services to tourists and consultancy services to local businesses: very much a prosaic business, not really dependent on perceptions of environmental quality to produce or market its services. Richard revealed during the interview that this business was one of a series, and that he had several failed enterprises behind him, including a market garden and a B&B. I enquired about the reasons for these businesses failing, especially the B&B as 'an environmental enterprise' of sorts. Richard was rather reluctant to discuss this in

detail, preferring to talk about his new enterprise, yet there was one interesting comment he did make in relation to the B&B. At the time he had been living in a remote, and very scenic, part of the study area – one that would have been expected to attract many tourists. Yet Richard's business failed, and the reason he gave was "*it was stunning out at *** it really was, a much better place to live than here on the main street stuck above the shop... but you can't live on scenery can you?*" But this is exactly what successful environmental entrepreneurs do – they make a living from exploiting 'scenery' – and 'rurality' and 'naturalness' and 'natural quality' and 'tradition' and all the other intangibles listed previously. Although Richard seemed to hold these values in the same way all in-migrants and many locals did, he seemed unable to make the connection between 'valuing' his environment and 'extracting value from' it. This act, of transforming an intangible value to a tangible product or service is really the nub of environmental enterprise, and one that was unfortunately beyond Richard. Another respondent, Jenny, living in a similarly remote and scenic location, runs a vegetarian B&B, and does so very successfully. There may be many reasons that Jenny has succeeded where Richard has failed, although they are hard to identify exclusively. Yet Jenny's business 'fits' well with it's location: in her marketing she emphasises the 'naturally healthy' vegetarian food on offer, and actively promotes the remote rural location of the B&B, with its opportunities for healthy exercise and other wholesome pursuits – all in-keeping with the quality of the 'natural' environment surrounding her. She 'lives on the scenery' very successfully.

The form of the product in frequently post-modern: sign-value takes precedence over use-value.

The phenomenon of environmental enterprise, understood as commodification of the environment, needs to be examined critically to be understood. We need to look below the surface of the products and services provided at the complex relationship between image, commodity and culture. Previously, the commercialisation of the environmental movement was examined, and it is possible to extend some of the observations to the products and services offered by the respondents of this study. Essentially, by producing and marketing their goods in a particular way that emphasises certain intangible values as being inherent in the product, environmental entrepreneurs are actively exploiting the currency of signs and symbols. It is no coincidence that goods produced in rural areas, particularly craft and food goods, command a higher price in the market than their more mundane, mass-produced competitors. The idea of 'added-value' is one that increasingly influences rural entrepreneurs: successful marketing projects, such as 'Orkney

Gold', are good examples of this. While environmental organisations use images and signs to sell their environmentalist message, entrepreneurs use the same techniques to market goods and services produced in an environment perceived to be inherently 'high quality'. They are selling the 'Town, Bad: Country, Good' message, selling symbols of 'rurality' and images of 'naturalness'. The normative nature of these intangible values makes them flexible, able to be shaped to fit the product or service being sold. As with 'environmentalism', and no doubt tied up with it, 'rurality', 'naturalness', and 'wilderness' are invariably 'good' or 'right'. Goodin's 'Green Value Theory' holds that anything 'natural' is valued more highly than the 'artificial' or 'man-made' counterpart. If an entrepreneur can somehow make a clear association between his or her product, and these notions of value, the economic value of the product can be increased – irrespective of the 'truth' behind the production process.

An excellent example of the above is Jackie's business, which was outlined previously. Her small company produces jewellery made from dried heather stems, dyed and set in metal settings. There is a workshop open to view from the sales floor. However, the bulk of the products sold are actually manufactured in a factory in Irvine, and transferred to Highland Perthshire to be sold – in a more appropriate setting, one where the 'traditional', 'handcrafted', and 'quality' of the products can be more easily emphasised. The jewellery, as it is marketed, symbolises traditional production processes, and Scottish heritage in spite of its rather mundane origins. It appears that as long as the symbols are in place, the 'truth' lying behind the product can be masked successfully.

Benton (1995) emphasises the use of images and artwork in various forms to 'sell' the environmental message. Alex, a wildlife artist living in one of the more remote glens in the study area, is one of the more obvious 'image makers' within the respondent group. Essentially, he produces and sells images of nature, which emphasise the 'natural beauty' and 'wilderness' of his surroundings. Images such as those produced by Alex (a well-renowned artist) help to shape and inform wider perceptions of the environment: they can be seen as 'mental constructions', helping people to interpret their environment in a subjective and often highly emotional way. Alex, selling images that are inherently post-modern in nature, acknowledges the association between the paintings he sells and the environment in which they are produced and sold: "*by the time [customers] get to the gallery, they seem to want to take something home with them – they want to take some of [their surroundings] home with them*". The paintings (or, more frequently, prints) that

they do take away with them are symbols of their visit, and symbolic of the environment itself, as it is perceived to be – 'wild' and utterly 'natural'.

The commodification of these personal values, along with other assets (financial assets, existing skills and abilities) makes the environmental enterprise inherently subjective, varying with the values of the individual.

This current study has not focused on personal assets, but they cannot be ignored as they undoubtedly contribute to the overall success of the individual entrepreneur. Some respondents had large amounts of capital at their disposal, while others had very little and were living very hand to mouth at the time of the interviews. Some had access to specialised equipment and premises for their business, while others worked from home. Many of the respondents used previously acquired skills in their enterprise, gained in employment, study or being brought up in the family business, while for others the decision to go into business was a veritable step into the unknown, with only their self-belief to guide them. Entrepreneurship is an inherently fluid process, changing and reforming in line with the entrepreneurs changing circumstances.

The fluidity of individual entrepreneurship, relating to both personal assets and environmental values, can be demonstrated by following the evolving business of James, who currently owns an organic wholefood store. James first arrived in Highland Perthshire in the 1980's, "*I just got on a train one day in London and came north… I'd had enough of it down there. I got off in Perth at first and then gradually moved further north into smaller and smaller places and then when we got settled here my son started school so we didn't want to move any more".* James' entrepreneurial history is interesting as it charts his evolution from being a 'prosaic' to an 'environmental' entrepreneur in exactly the way outlined in Diagram 7.2. His first business was a small bookshop cum newsagent cum video hire shop, which was relatively successful until a WH Smith chain store set up in the town. James responded by firstly cutting out the newsagency, and gradually developing into a more specialised book and video store. Soon after, in line with his growing interest in agricultural and food safety issues, he started selling a small range of vegetarian and organic wholefoods through his shop: the business was known as 'Rentals and Lentils' at this point. The wholefood side of the business has gradually expanded to the extent that it has become the sole focus of the business. James has become a passionate advocate of organic and wholefoods. The changing nature of the business reflects James' own development. As he said, "*the first*

business was purely because we thought it would work, that we would be able to make a living from it. At the time there was no real competition – not like a chain store or anything... it was just when I got a bit of experience of running a business that I started to look around for something that suited me more... We wanted to do something that fitted in a bit better with our own beliefs...Gradually, as I got to know more and more about wholefoods, I started to phase out the video side of things and to concentrate on the foods". Thus, James' business has evolved gradually over a number of years to reflect both his changing values, his personal skills as an entrepreneur and his knowledge of both the area and the market. As he put it "*the wholefood business just wouldn't have worked when I first came here I mean I didn't know anything about it really, other than that I wanted to live in a beautiful place and improve my quality of life. All I was interested in at first was getting the business going – any business. After we got settled, then it was time to start doing something that really mattered, that was really important to us... I don't think ********* was really ready for organic wholefoods in the early 80's anyway!"*

7.8 Summary & Conclusions

The model describes the nature of the environmental enterprises encountered in the research, and emphasises the characteristics that distinguish them from other forms of enterprise found in rural areas (prosaic enterprises, for example). The versatile and fluid nature of enterprise was demonstrated, resulting from the combination of subjective environmental values and personal qualities such as skills and other assets. Although the form of the enterprises varied greatly, the entrepreneurial strategies adopted were intimately tied to individual perceptions about the environment in which the entrepreneurs were located. The intangible values that inform the entrepreneurs own perceptions of quality in the rural environment, are commodified and marketed through their various enterprises. The model demonstrates the way in which enterprises are shaped by their owners' own perceptions, in order to exploit sources of intangible value shared by entrepreneur and customer. The value-driven nature of the environmental enterprise is reflected in the post-modern symbolic nature of many of the products and services offered for consumption, where sign-value has transcended the use-value of the product.

Diagram 7.3 A Model of Environmental Enterprise in a Perceived High Quality 'Natural 'Rural Environment

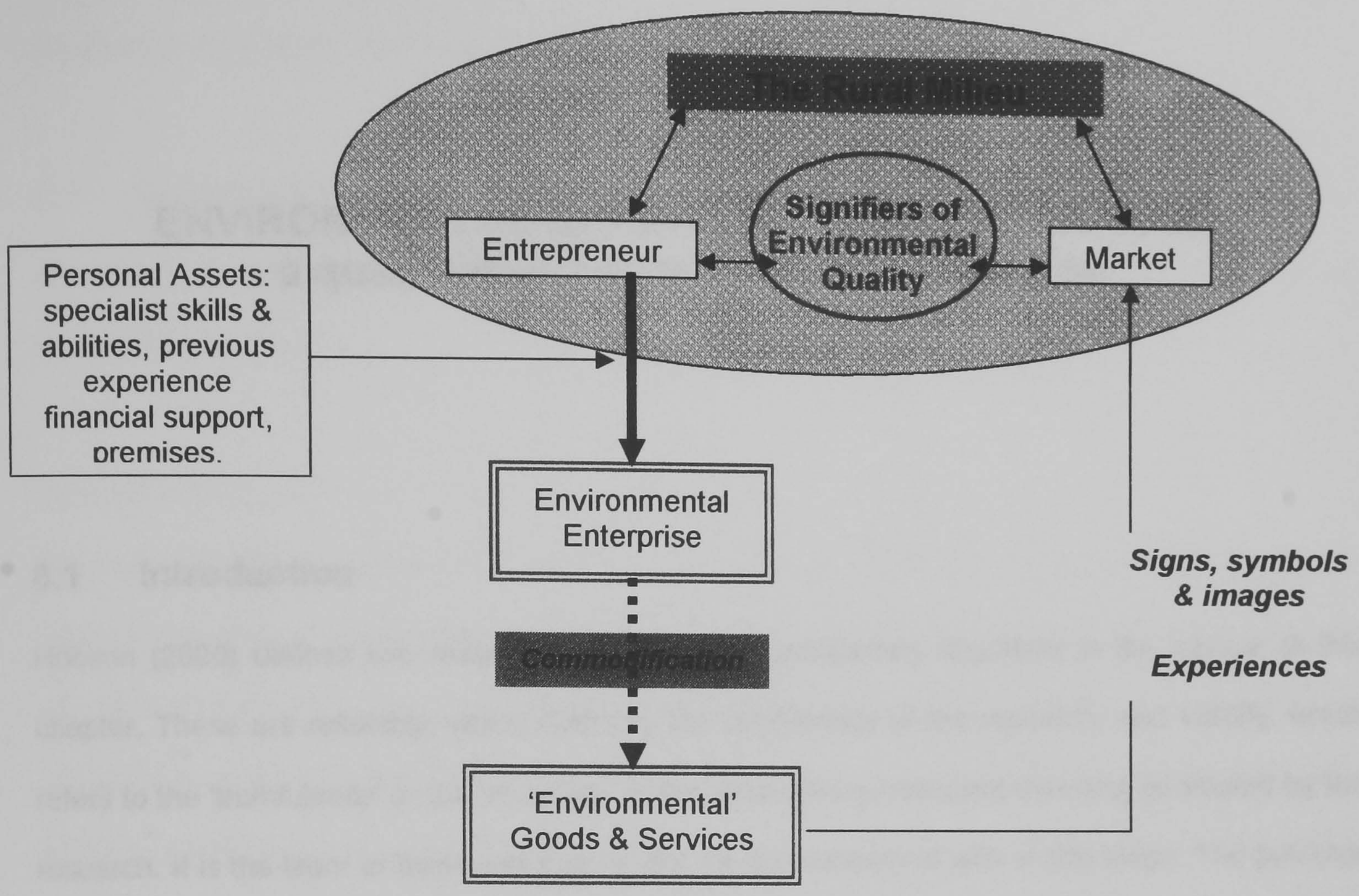


Diagram 7.3 above demonstrated the findings outlined in the model, showing the integration of intangible values into tangible business outcomes by environmental entrepreneurs located in a perceived high quality 'natural' environment. It also emphasises the 'flow of values', from intangible values in the rural milieu to tangible 'signs, symbols and images'.

Having delved deeply into the rich source of data provided by the interviews with environmental entrepreneurs in the study area, it is now appropriate to move on to the final chapters of this thesis. The next chapter will feature a more quantitative approach to the question of environmental enterprise, presenting the results of a postal survey of small business owners in the study area. The final chapter will summarise the findings of the whole thesis, and offer some final conclusions, as well as suggestions for further research.

CHAPTER EIGHT

ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY & RURAL ENTERPRISE: a quantitative approach to test the model

8.1 Introduction

Hobson (2000) defines two research terms that are particularly important in the context of this chapter. These are *reliability*, which refers to the consistency of the research, and *validity*, which refers to the 'truthfulness' or the 'accuracy' of the data (and subsequent theories) generated by the research. It is the latter of these particularly that we are concerned with at this stage. The potential limitations and criticisms of the grounded theory methodology adopted in chapter 7, and outlined in chapter 5, tend to cluster around claims of 'subjectivity' and 'interviewer bias'. The non-representative sampling process, for example, is particularly open to such accusations, being guided essentially by the need to seek out particular 'types' of respondents believed to hold the necessary information that is sought at various stages of the analysis and data collection process. The use of 'multiple methods' in social investigation can perhaps help to counter these claims, via a technique the Hobson calls "cross-method validity-raising" (ibid: 9). By deliberately using one technique alongside another, the researcher can hope to both develop a fuller understanding of the subject under study, to overcome the limitations of some methodologies, and to actually increase the validity of the data collection and analysis process.

As outlined previously, the purpose of carrying out a quantitative exercise of the type attempted here is to test the theories developed from the qualitative part of the research. In chapter 7, the data derived from a series of in-depth, semi-structured interviews has been thoroughly 'poked and prodded', analysed and refined to develop a model, which describes and explains the action of environmental enterprise in the context of a perceived high quality 'natural' environment. In the interests of strengthening the validity of this model, a large-scale survey questionnaire was

administered to 560 respondents within the study area of Highland Perthshire. This current chapter aims to present the results and the analysis of the data, relating these to the observations and the model outlined in chapter 7. Thus, the quantitative findings of the large-scale survey can be tied to the much deeper understandings developed through the qualitative interviews.

8.2 Methodology

The aim is to test or verify the theoretical framework developed from the data collected and analysed in Chapter 7.

Sampling Strategy

The sampling strategy adopted was quite straightforward. 560 respondents were contacted, who represented those not interviewed during the qualitative stage of the research. The database itself did have its limitations, as noted previously, but in the absence of any other such database, it proved to be a useful resource for the needs of this survey. 560 is an easily manageable number of potential respondents for a postal survey of this type, and to limit the sample population (through random sampling, for example) would have served no purpose other than to reduce the potential response rate. 139 questionnaires were returned in total giving a highly respectable response rate of 25%.

Data Collection using Likert Questionnaires

A Likert scaling questionnaire, designed to give a quantitative indication of personal attitude towards the 'relationship between valued environments and rural enterprise", was used for this survey'. The scale used was simple, consisting of four possible responses ('strongly agree', 'slightly agree', 'slightly disagree', 'strongly disagree'). The survey consisted of twelve statements relating to the subject of environmental values and enterprise, and designed to test the model developed in chapter 7. To ensure that the questionnaire was understandable to potential respondents, several of the statements used were direct quotes obtained from the interviews reported in chapter 7.

In addition to the standard 'Likert' statements, a number of open-ended questions were included in the questionnaire, allowing the respondent to provide further comments, should he or she wish. This technique worked very well in the questionnaire survey reported in chapter 6, and proved a useful source of supplementary data, which was quantified and analysed.

A pilot survey was done to ensure that the questionnaire was workable. A list of possible statements for inclusion in the survey was tested on a small sample of six respondents. The researcher was present while the respondent completed the survey, in order to observe any difficulties encountered and establish the ease of completion, as well as to note any statements that would not prove to be adequately discriminatory. The test group also raised some instances of ambiguous wording, which were remedied for the main postal survey. The full questionnaire is attached in Appendix 1.

Each survey was prefaced with a 'Details' sheet to gather some person information about the respondents. Surveys were posted to the respondents along with a covering letter describing the research project, and providing contact details for the researcher. A copy of the UHI Millennium Institute Research Ethics Statement was also made available, and respondents were assured of confidentiality. As above, a total of 560 surveys were distributed to the respondents, with a total of 139 being returned within a 4-week period (25% response rate).

8.3 Analysis of Likert Rating Data

There are several points to bear in mind when attempting the analysis of such data, several of which were outlined in chapter 5. As the data is organised on an ordinal scale, it is not possible to carry out statistical tests that might be applied to data collected at higher level. Thus descriptive techniques of analysis are the most appropriate to indicate the findings of the survey, reflecting the quite basic level of measurement that is being attempted here. The data can be summed to produce descriptive statistics and percentage responses for each question, and this statistical information can then be compared with the observations and the model developed in chapter 7. Whilst this percentage is in no way statistically significant, it can be taken to be indicative of strongly-felt beliefs and attitudes and examined in conjunction with the findings of chapter 7. For each question in the Likert scaling-type survey, the descriptive statistics are presented below, together with a short discussion of the interpretation of the results in the context of the observations from chapter 7. Prior to the analysis of the quantitative data, some basic statistical data can be used to introduce the dataset. A total of 138 responses were received. The age and origins of the respondents were as follows:

Table 8.1 Respondent Age

Age Range	Frequency	Percent
18-30	4	2.9
31-40	28	20.3
41-55	62	44.9
56+	44	31.9
Total	138	100.0

Thus, the largest group represented were aged over 55 (32%). This may be a reflection of the population of Highland Perthshire with older in-migrants, as was pointed out in chapter 7, or it may be that older people are simply more willing to fill in questionnaires of the type sent – there is no way to tell using this dataset. Age and the respondents' status as local or in-migrant can be cross-tabulated thus;

Table 8.2 Respondent Age and Residential Status

		Age				Total
		18-30	31-40	41-55	56+	
Local	Count	3	16	31	25	75
	% of total	2.2%	11.6%	22.5%	18.1%	54.3%
In-Migrant	Count	1	12	31	19	63
	% of total	7%	8.7%	22.5%	13.8%	45.7%
Total	Count	4	28	62	44	138
	% of total	2.9%	20.3%	44.9%	31.9%	100.0%

The data shows that there is little appreciable difference between the age profiles of the local and the in-migrant respondents. The basic data does not tell us too much about the respondents attitudes, but does at least demonstrate that any differences that we can identify between the two respondents groups, incomer and in-migrant, are not likely to be due to their respective age profiles, as these have been shown to be broadly similar. It should also be pointed out that the respective representation of the residential status of the survey respondents is rather more even than that of the interview group (54% local to 46% in-migrant for the former, 36% local to 64% in-migrant in the latter).

8.3.1 Exploring attitudes towards environmental value in Highland Perthshire

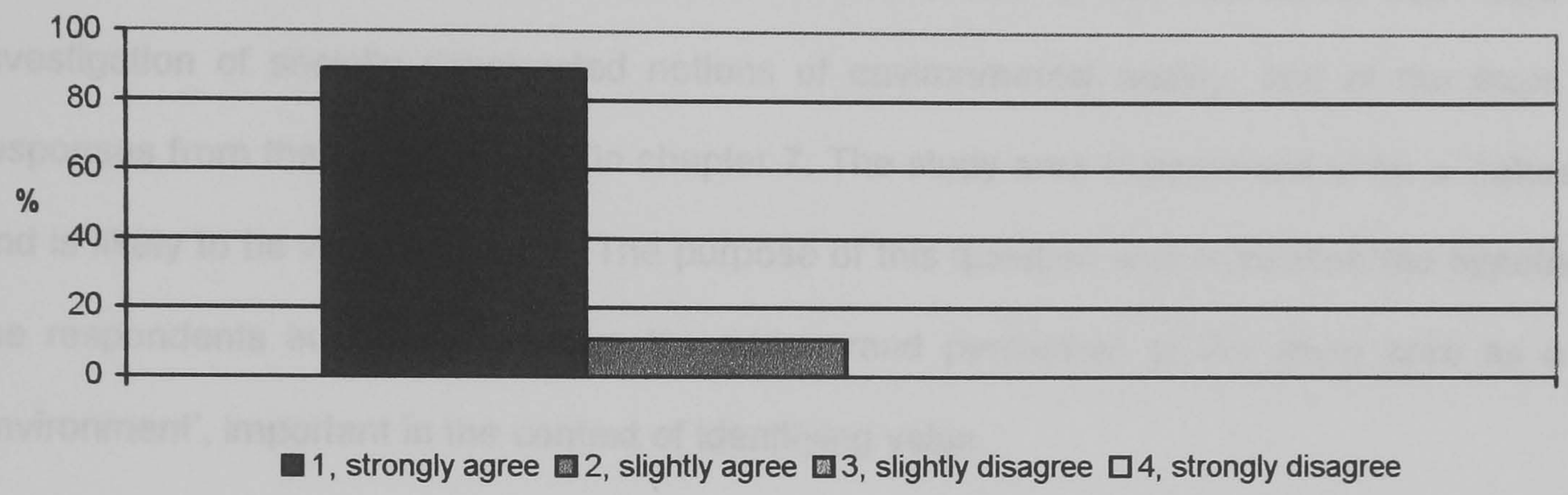
In the following analysis, Questions 1-5 were intended to develop a general picture of how the respondents perceive the environment of the study area, and their reasons for valuing it. These questions were very much developed in line with the literature on the subject, and also with the responses to the interviews discussed in chapters 6 & 7. The results are presented in both tabular and graphic form, in figures 8.1 to 8.5.

Question 1

The environment of Highland Perthshire can be described as a 'high quality rural environment.

Figure 8.1 Responses to Question 1

	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Agree	123	89.1%
Slightly Agree	15	10.9%
Slightly Disagree	0	0
Strongly Disagree	0	0
Total	138	100.0%



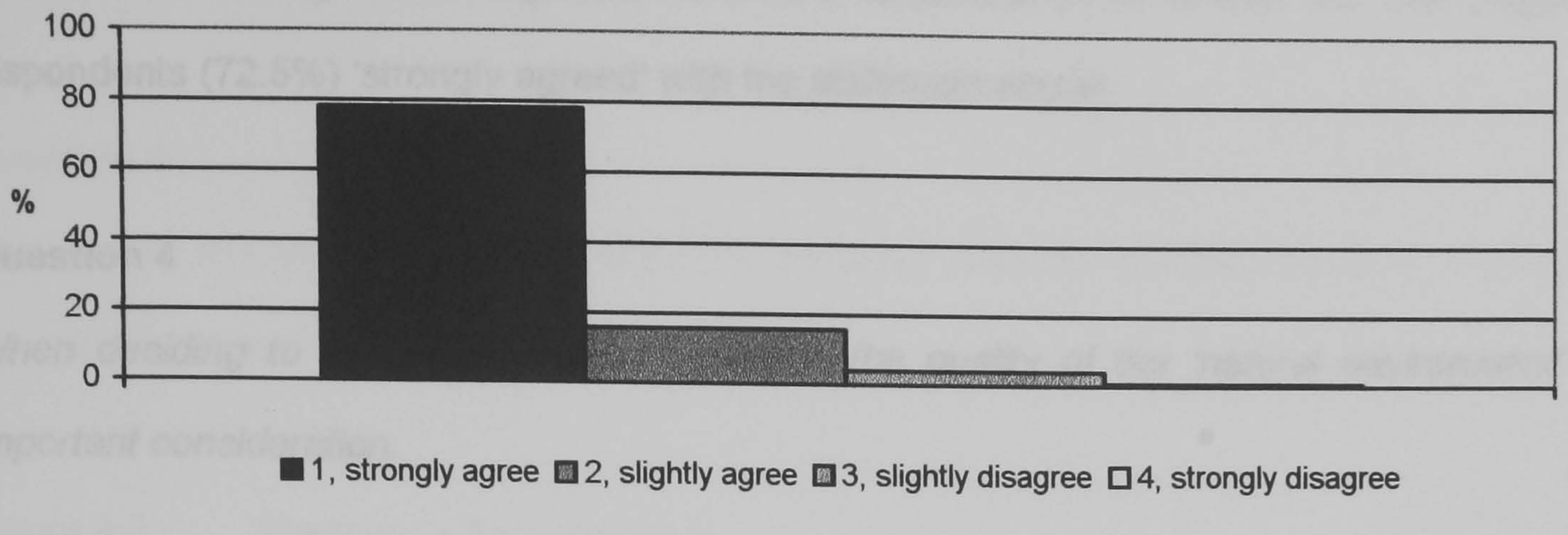
The interpretation of the responses to this question is fairly straightforward, and to be expected. All respondents agreed slightly or strongly with the statement that Highland Perthshire represents a 'high quality rural environment', which correlates strongly with the general findings of the previous chapter. The purpose of this question was really to confirm that this specific perception of the study area is held widely throughout the respondent groups, and the above statistics demonstrate this quite conclusively.

Question 2

The environment of Highland Perthshire can be described as a 'natural' environment.

Figure 8.2 Responses to Question 2

	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Agree	108	78.3%
Slightly Agree	22	15.9%
Slightly Disagree	6	4.3%
Strongly Disagree	1	0.7%
Total	138	100%



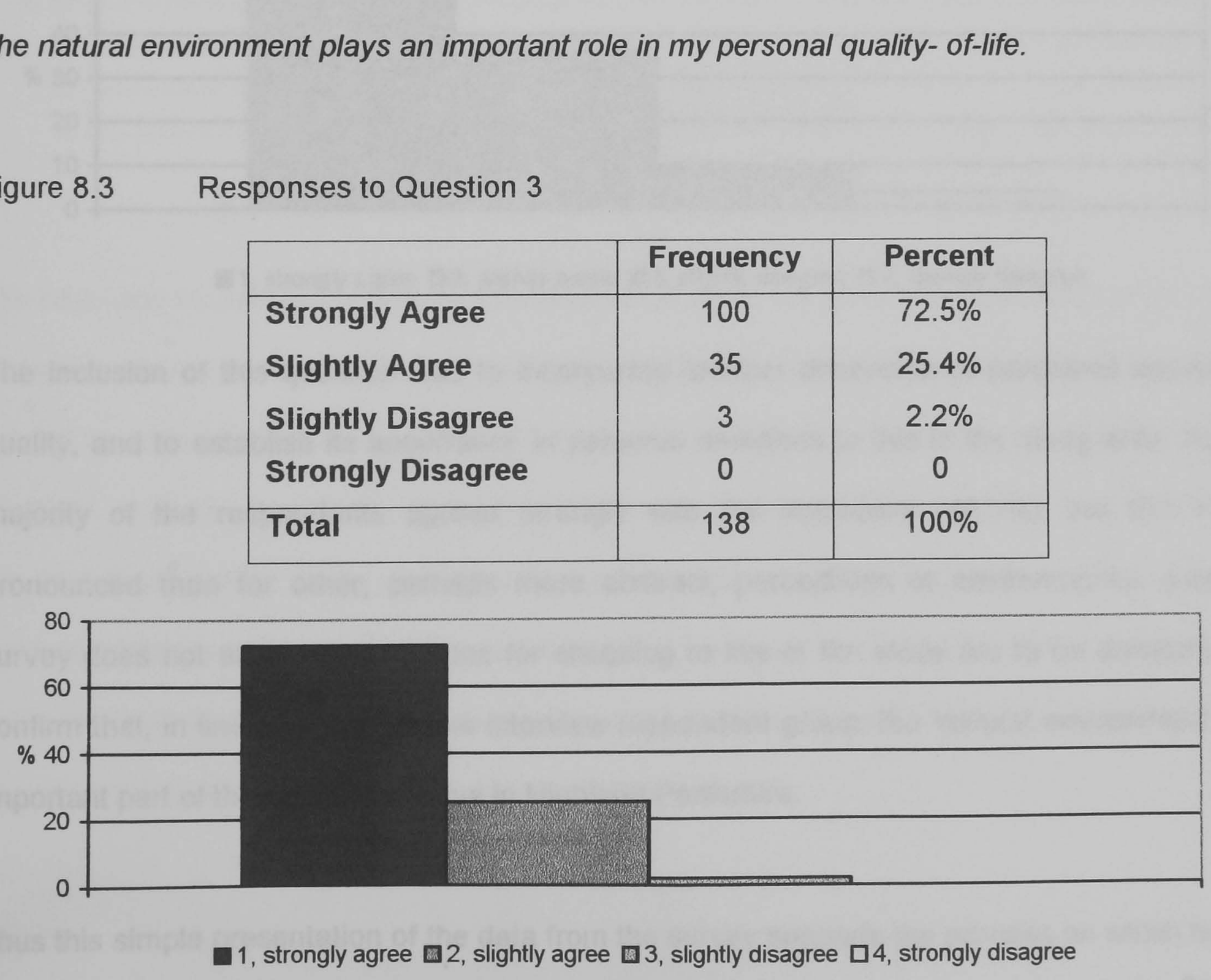
Again, this response is broadly in line with the response of the interviews, both from the first investigation of socially constructed notions of environmental quality, and of the more detailed responses from the entrepreneurs in chapter 7. The study area is perceived to be a 'natural' place, and is likely to be valued as such. The purpose of this question was to confirm the hypothesis that the respondents in the study share the widespread perception of the study area as a 'natural environment', important in the context of identifying value.

Question 3

The natural environment plays an important role in my personal quality- of-life.

Figure 8.3 Responses to Question 3

	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Agree	100	72.5%
Slightly Agree	35	25.4%
Slightly Disagree	3	2.2%
Strongly Disagree	0	0
Total	138	100%



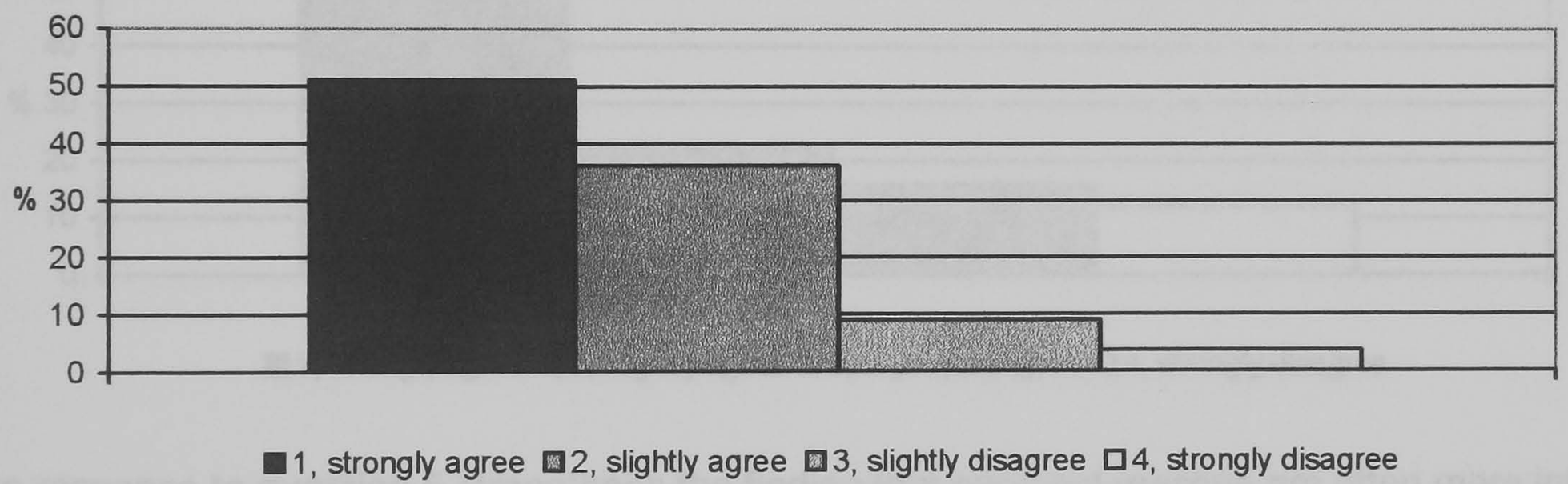
The aim of this question, again strongly agreed with by the majority of respondents, was to test the perceptions held by the respondents, and to confirm that 'naturalness' was an important element of their overall 'valuing' of the Highland Perthshire environment. As before, the vast majority of the respondents (72.5%) 'strongly agreed' with the statement above.

Question 4

When deciding to live in Highland Perthshire, the quality of the 'natural environment' was an important consideration.

Figure 8.4 Responses to Question 4

	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Agree	68	51.1%
Slightly Agree	48	36.1%
Slightly Disagree	12	9%
Strongly Disagree	5	3.8%
Total	133	100%



The inclusion of this question was to incorporate another dimension of perceived environmental quality, and to establish its importance in personal decisions to live in the study area. Again, the majority of the respondents agreed strongly with the statement (49.3%), but this was less pronounced than for other, perhaps more abstract, perceptions of environmental quality. The survey does not allow other reasons for choosing to live in the study are to be divulged, only to confirm that, in line with the smaller interview respondent group, the 'natural environment' was an important part of their decision to live in Highland Perthshire.

Thus this simple presentation of the data from the survey supports the premise on which the model is based, that entrepreneurs in Highland Perthshire hold certain values relating to the environment

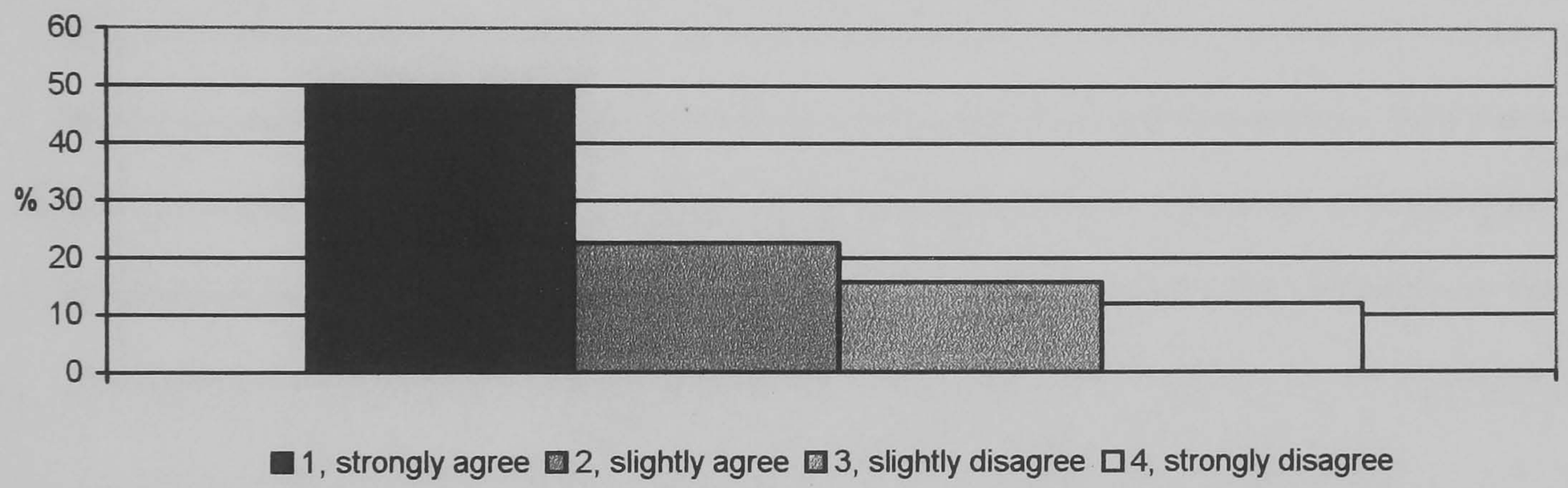
in which they live, and that notions of 'naturalness' are an important element of the overall social construction. These perceptions and values are held strongly enough to influence the decision of the respondents to live in the study area.

Question 5

I choose to live in Highland Perthshire for personal reasons, irrespective of its suitability as a business location.

Figure 8.5 Responses to Question 5

	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Agree	66	49.6%
Slightly Agree	30	22.6%
Slightly Disagree	21	15.8%
Strongly Disagree	16	12%
Total	133	100%



The response to question 5 strengthens the finding that personal reasons are often more influential in rural business decisions than straightforward economic ones. Obviously, the above data does not tell us what the 'personal reasons' are: they may include family roots, a desire to live a rural 'lifestyle', or inertia. However, in the light of the responses to questions 3 and 4, it seems likely that the perceived quality of the natural environment will be a major influence in this respect. The purpose of this question, and of the previous ones, has been to confirm that the respondents, rural entrepreneurs, share widespread values and perceptions of the 'natural' environment, as this is an important basis for the model developed in chapter 7.

8.3.2 Enterprise in Highland Perthshire

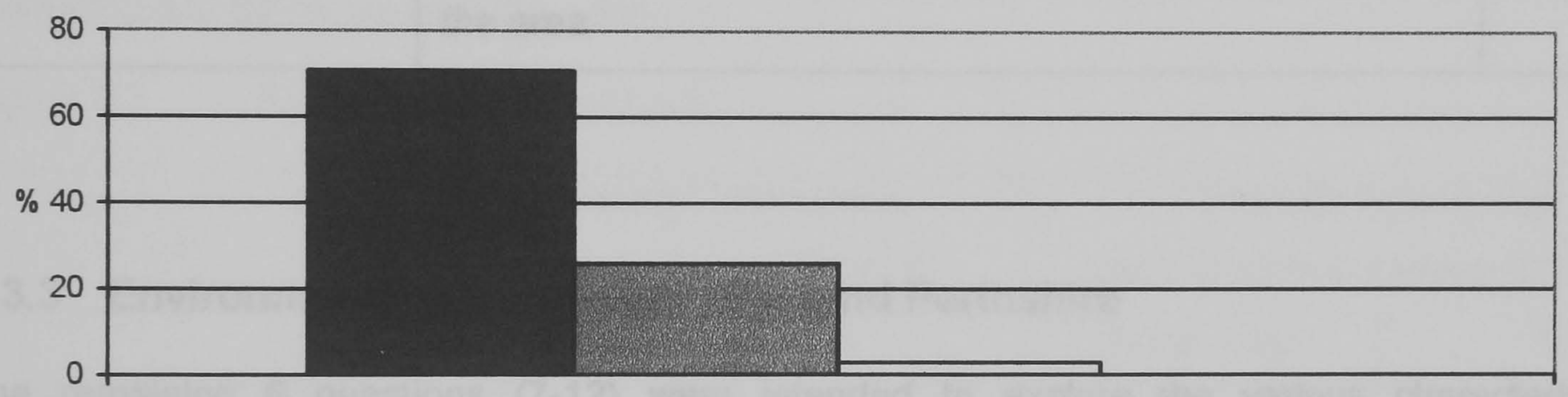
Questions 6 relates to the general attitudes towards the suitability of the study area as a business location, acting as a measure of 'satisfaction'. Figure 8.6 outlines the results in both tabular and graphic form.

Question 6

Highland Perthshire provides a satisfactory location for my business

Figure 8.6 Responses to Question 6

	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Agree	71	71%
Slightly Agree	26.1	26.1%
Slightly Disagree	2.9	2.9%
Strongly Disagree	0	0
Total	138	100%



Surprisingly, given the often gloomy outlook for rural businesses, almost all respondents reported that this particular rural area provided a satisfactory business location (97.1%). Obviously this question alone does not allow the reasons for the generally high level of satisfaction to be probed in great detail, but an open section was included to allow respondents to expand on their answer. The answers were examined and coded into 8 different responses, and the results are tabulated below. The results show that the main positive characteristics of the study area as a location for business are the tourist customer base, the accessibility of the area and the heritage / environmental features of the area that are valued both by respondents (quality-of-life) and their customers.

Table 8.3 Categories of Response to Q 6: Highland Perthshire as a Business Location

Response	Description	% *
Tourist Base	Respondent benefits from the tourist market in the area	42%
Environment / Heritage	Respondent recognises the local environment / heritage as an important resource	31.9%
Accessibility	Respondent benefits from ease of access for customers and self	26.8%
Business Reasons	Respondent cited various financial and other business reasons for being satisfied with the location e.g. taking over family business	19.6%
Activities /Local Interest	Respondent depends on the availability of local facilities for recreation / visiting	13.8%
Personal / Lifestyle	Respondent feels that the area provides for their own quality of life	13.8%
Rural Business	Respondent feels that the business is inherently 'rural' and could not be pursued elsewhere e.g. farming, estate management, drystane dyking.	10.9%
Lack of Competition	Respondent benefited from lack of similar businesses in the area	5.1%

8.3.3 Environmental Enterprise in Highland Perthshire

The remaining 6 questions (7-12) were intended to explore the various characteristics of environmental enterprise as described through the model presented in chapter 7. The various questions aimed to establish respondents' attitudes concerning the importance of their location in a 'high quality natural environment' to their businesses. This was a particularly challenging part of the survey, especially the selection of appropriate statements to include in the questionnaire. One of the strengths of face-to-face contact with respondents is being able to help them understand specific questions, and to ask them to explain their responses in detail. The concepts being put over and the information sought is difficult to reduce adequately to a few statements. However, the statements used were selected from a long list of possible statements by virtue of their discriminatory power – as outlined above it is important to avoid statements that all respondents are likely to answer in the same way.

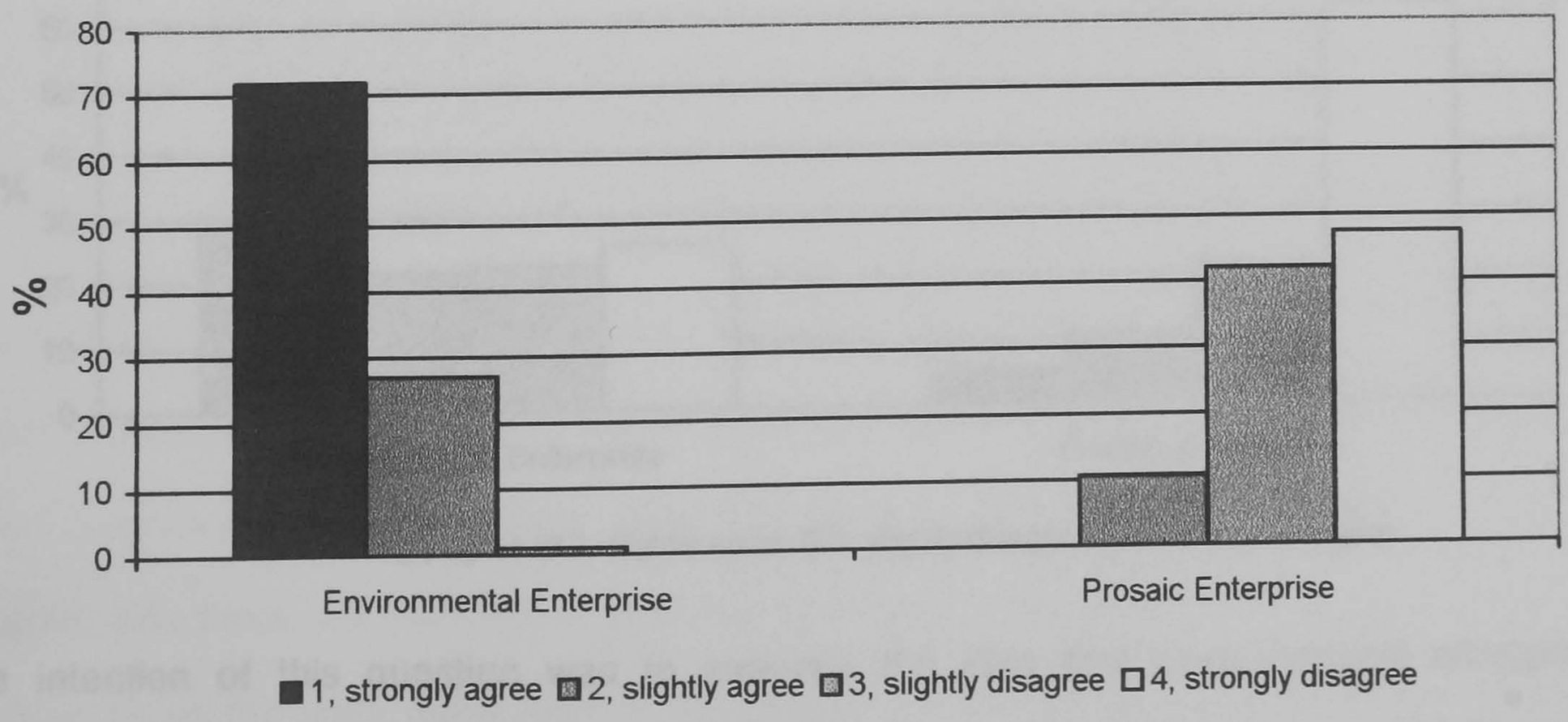
In chapter 7 the assigning of businesses to the 'environmental' or 'non-environmental' was done on the basis of the form of the product, and the entrepreneurial strategy underlying the operation of the business. Without a close and detailed examination of the business, it is hard to identify these elements of individual businesses. Yet this was not possible within the framework of the quantitative study. Instead, it was decided that the respondents would be categorised on the basis of their answer to one question (Question 7), to either 'environmental' or 'non-environmental' businesses, irrespective of the business sector or form. This represents an attempt to objectify the definition of an 'environmental' enterprise, and thus allow the model to be tested through a qualitative comparison of 'environmental' and 'non-environmental' enterprises. The presentation and discussion of the results of questions 7-12 are therefore presented as cross-tabulations of the enterprise type and the response to each question, and reported in tabular and graphic form (figures 8.7 to 8.12).

Question 7

The quality of the 'natural environment' in which my business is located can be used as a positive marketing tool for my product / service

Figure 8.7 Responses to Question 7

	Environmental Enterprise (Respondent scores '1' or '2')		Prosaic Enterprise (Respondents scores '3' or '4')	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Strongly agree	72	72%	0	0%
Slightly agree	27	27%	4	10.5%
Slightly disagree	1	1%	16	42.1%
Strongly disagree	0	0%	18	47.4%
Total	100	100%	38	100%



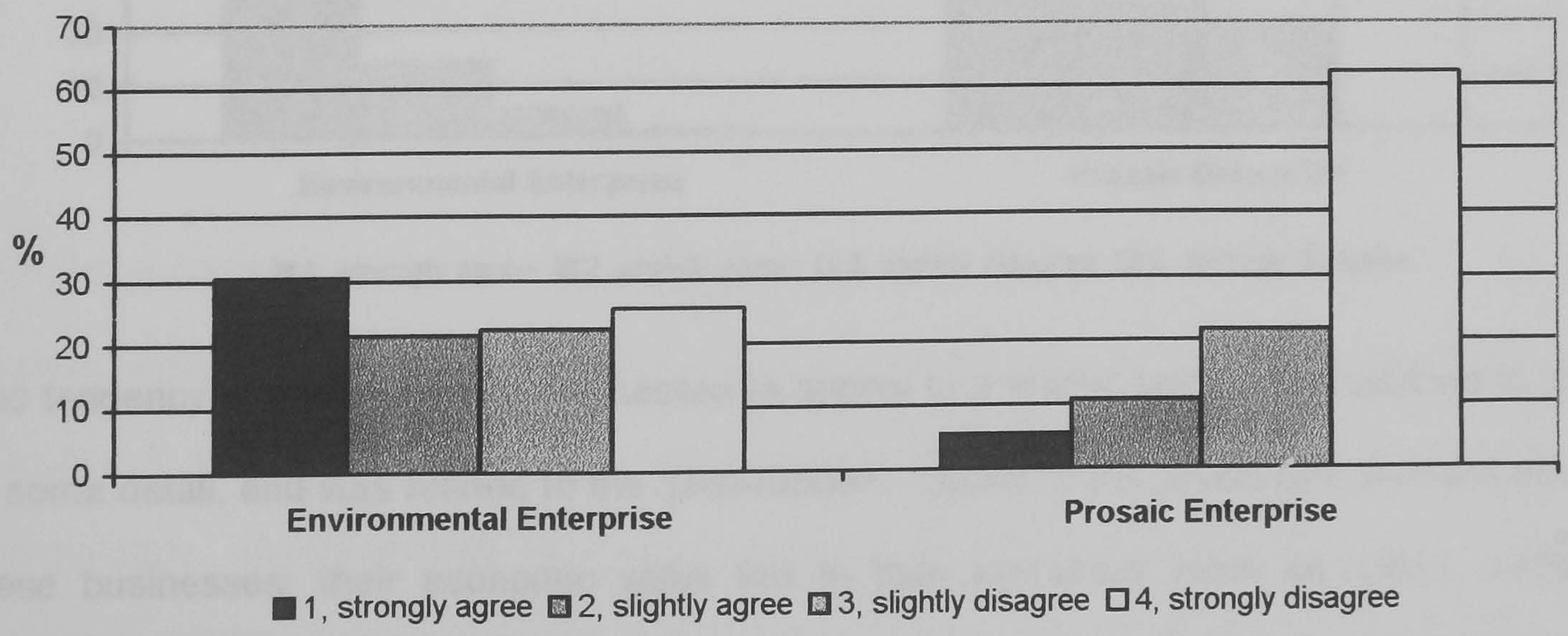
The bar chart above demonstrates what seems to be an essential difference between the two forms of rural business identified previously in chapter 7: environmental and prosaic enterprise. Using the Likert-type scale, respondents scoring '1 – strongly agree' or '2 – slightly agree' on the above question were assigned to the category of 'environmental enterprise', while those scoring '3' or '4' were listed as 'prosaic' enterprises. There were found to be a total of 100 environmental enterprises in the sample, and 38 non-environmental, or prosaic, enterprises. Environmental businesses depend heavily on the perceived quality of the 'natural environment' for the success of their business, whereas prosaic businesses do not. This was a key emergent theme of the analysis of the qualitative data, and it is most certainly supported by the quantitative data.

Question 8

My type of business belongs to the countryside – it couldn't operate as successfully in an urban location

Figure 8.8 Responses to Question 8

	Environmental Enterprise		Prosaic Enterprise	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Strongly agree	30	30.6%	2	5.4
Slightly agree	21	21.4%	4	10.8
Slightly disagree	22	22.4%	8	21.6
Strongly disagree	25	25.6%	23	62.2
Total	98	100%	37	100%



The intention of this question was to examine the idea that environmental enterprises are dependent on their rural location for success. The results, although not unsupportive of the theory,

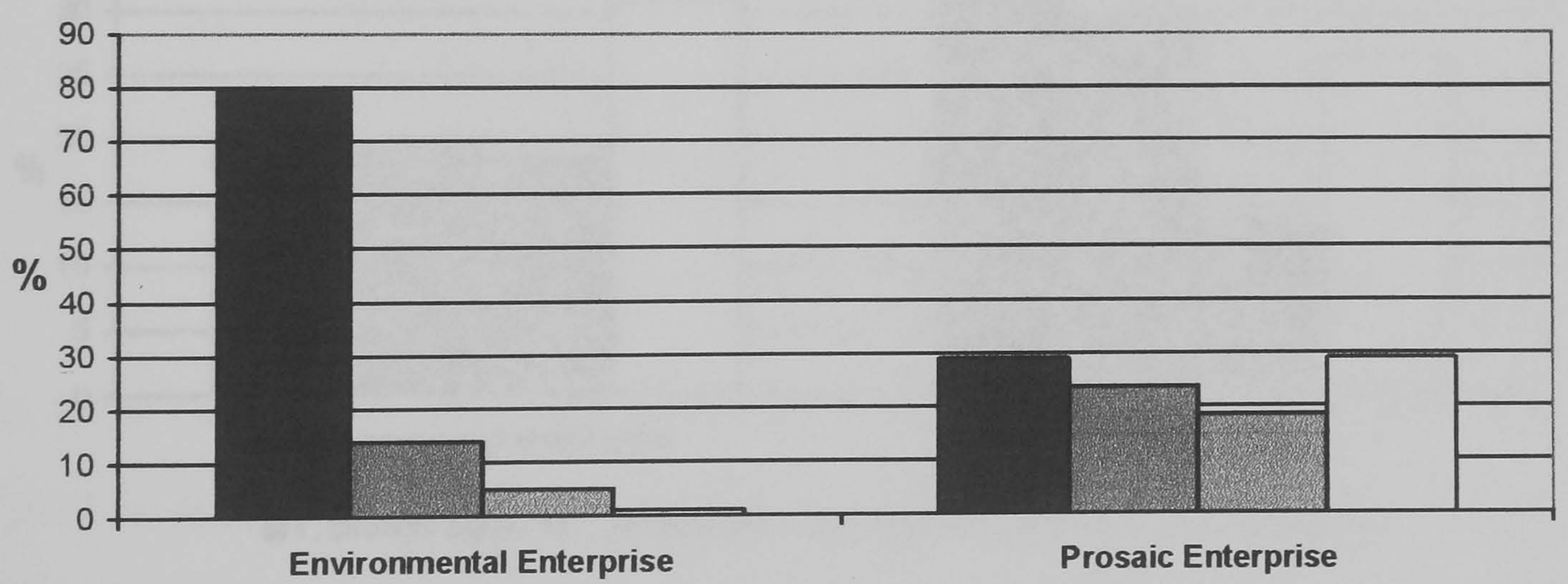
are somewhat ambiguous, for environmental business at least. Responses were evenly spread across the different scales of agreement, though a slightly higher percentage did 'strongly agree' with the statement. Interestingly the responses of the prosaic entrepreneurs revealed that very few respondents felt that their business was somehow intrinsically reliant on its rural location, and the majority (62%) strongly disagreed with the statement given above. So this finding does support the theory, albeit through a negative response from the non-environmental entrepreneurs.

Question 9

The presence of tourists / visitors to the Highland Perthshire area directly affect the success of my business

Figure 8.9 Reponses to Question 9

	Environmental Enterprise		Prosaic Enterprise	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Strongly agree	80	80%	11	28.9%
Slightly agree	14	14%	9	23.7%
Slightly disagree	5	5%	7	18.5%
Strongly disagree	1	15%	11	28.9%
Total	100	100%	38	100%



The tendency of environmental businesses to appeal to a tourist market was outlined in chapter 7, in some detail, and was related to the 'post-modern' nature of the goods and services provided by these businesses: their economic value lies in their perceived value as 'signs, symbols and images', and these are the type of products that characterise environmental enterprises. Prosaic businesses on the other hand, tend to serve local markets, selling more 'down to earth' products

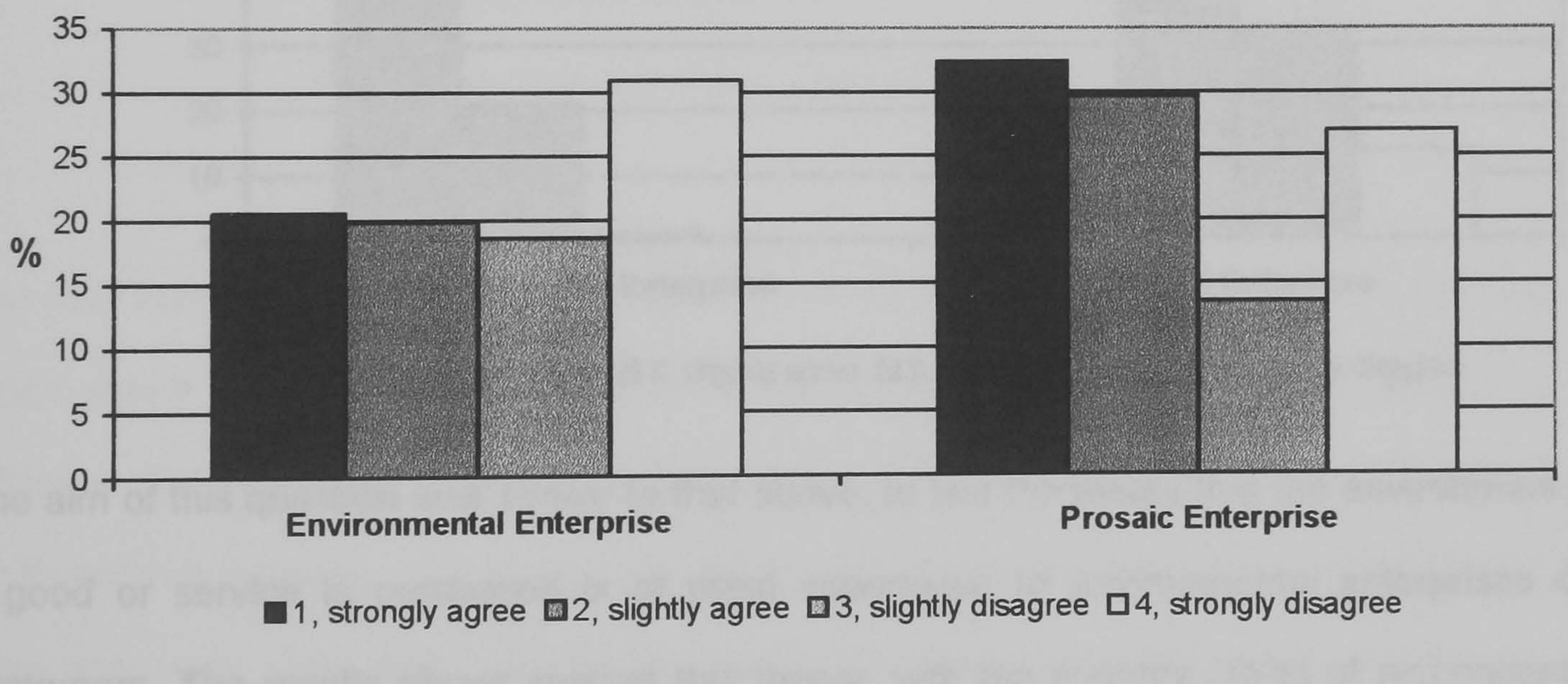
and services to local people who are less likely to be 'taken in ' by the tricks of the post-modern entrepreneurs. The responses to this statement broadly support the above theory, showing the high level of dependence on tourism markets by environmental enterprises. Yet, the responses of the prosaic groups are also of interest, and point, perhaps, to the underlying widespread reliance on tourists and visitors to support the entire economy of the study area.

Question 10

My customers would still use my business if I was located in a different environment, such as an urban location.

Figure 8.10 Responses to Question 10

	Environmental Enterprise		Prosaic Enterprise	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Strongly agree	20	20.6%	12	32.4%
Slightly agree	29	29.9%	11	29.7%
Slightly disagree	18	18.6%	5	13.5%
Strongly disagree	30	30.9%	10	27.0%
Total	97	100%	38	100%



The aim of this question was to test the theory that environmental businesses depend on their rural location, and that their business form might be less well suited to an urban environment. On reflection it was not a particularly useful question to ask, or could have been worded more appropriately. Environmental entrepreneurs were almost precisely split down the middle on this statement (49.5% disagreeing and 50.5% agreeing with the statement). The result was slightly more clear for the prosaic entrepreneurs, where 62.1%of respondents agreed with the statement, indicating – as expected – that the location is less important to the success of the business. Too

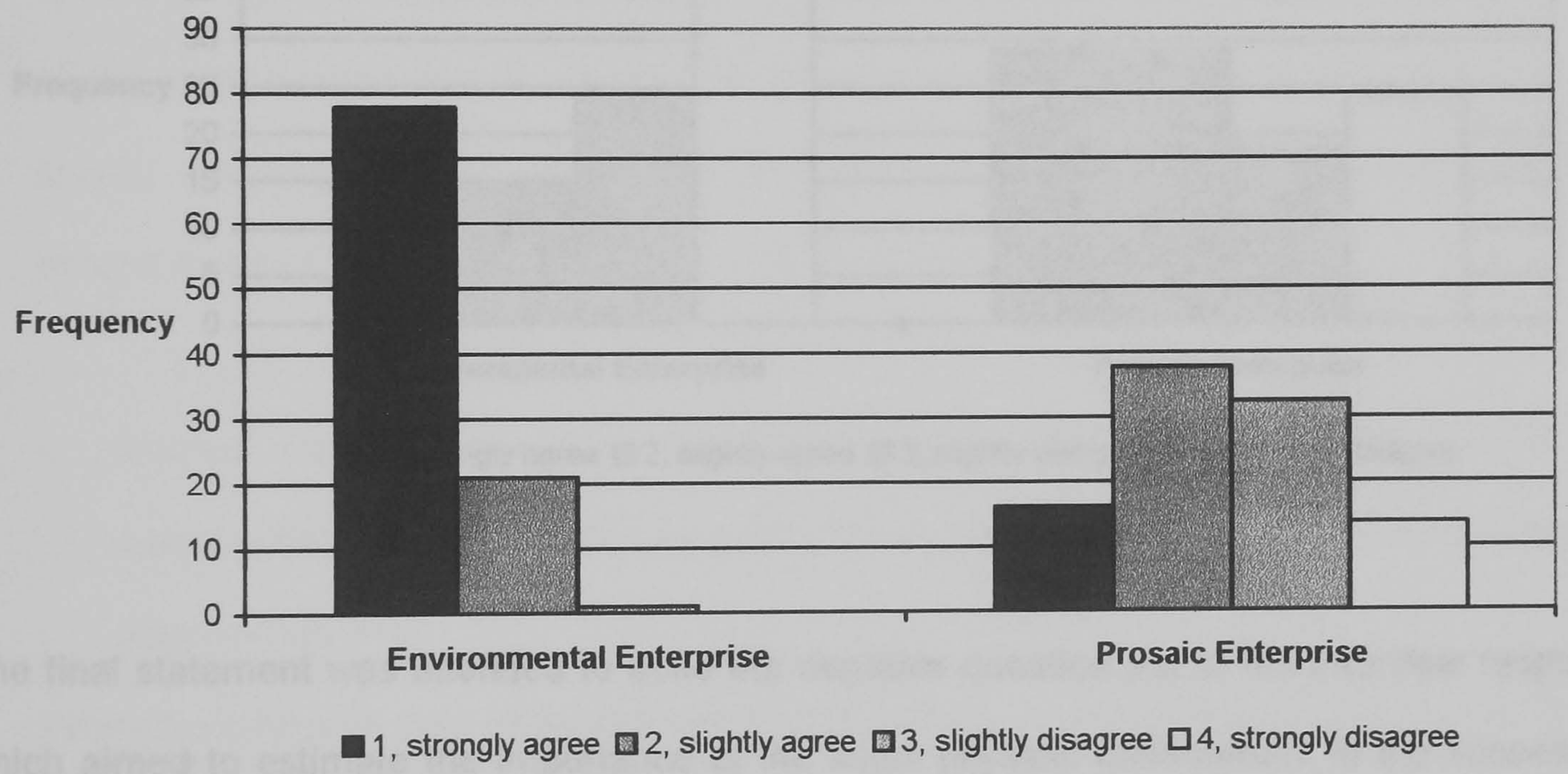
many different elements were incorporated into this question, resulting in the 'fuzzy' result shown above.

Question 11

My customers value the fact that my business is located in a 'high quality rural environment'

Figure 8.11 Responses to Question 11

	Environmental Enterprise		Prosaic Enterprise	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Strongly agree	78	78%	6	16.2%
Slightly agree	21	21%	14	37.8%
Slightly disagree	1	1%	12	32.4%
Strongly disagree	0	0	5	13.6%
Total	100	100%	37	100%



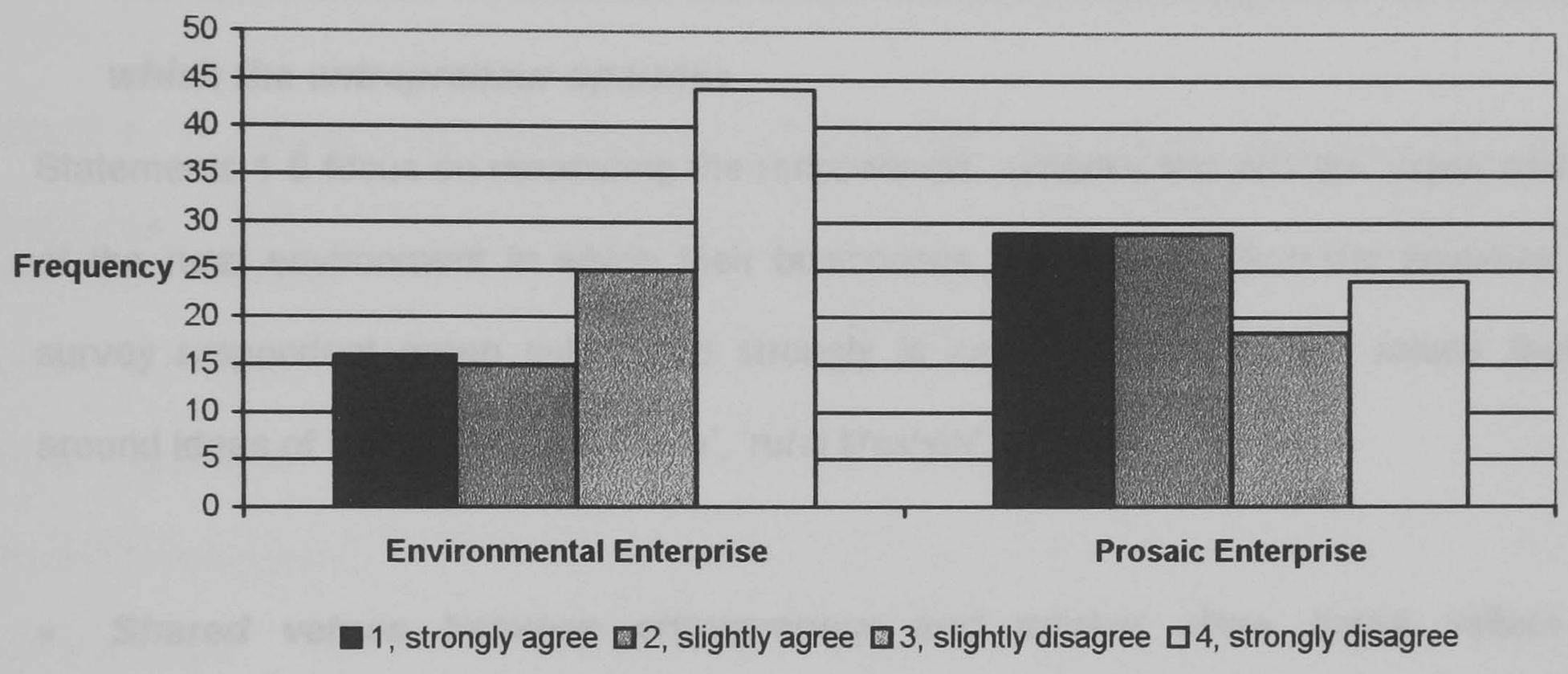
The aim of this question was similar to that above, to test the theory that the environment in which a good or service is purchased is of great importance to environmental enterprises and their customers. The results above support this theory, with the majority (78%) of respondents in this group 'strongly agreeing' with the statement. Prosaic enterprises, on the other hand, report that they do not feel that their particular location is of great concern to their customers, and this is certainly in line with the observations of the prosaic entrepreneurs in chapter 7.

Question 12

A large-scale physical development (such as a quarry or a housing development) in the immediate location of my business would not affect the success of my business to any great extent.

Figure 8.12 Responses to Question 12

	Environmental Enterprise		Prosaic Enterprise	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Strongly agree	16	16%	11	28.9%
Slightly agree	15	15%	11	28.9%
Slightly disagree	25	25%	7	18.4%
Strongly disagree	44	44%	9	23.8%
Total	100	100%	38	100%



The final statement was intended to echo the negative question put to the interview respondents, which aimed to estimate the importance of the intact physical environment to the success of the business. The familiar development 'bogeys' of quarry and a housing development were suggested as theoretical negative changes in the nature and quality of the 'natural environment', as these were the ones most often mentioned by the previous respondents. As would be expected, environmental entrepreneurs, that have been shown to rely on the exploitation of perceived environmental quality in their business operation, feel they have most to lose should the nature of the 'natural environment' be changed for the worse, with no less than 69% disagreeing with the above statement. Prosaic businesses on the other hand did not demonstrate such strong concerns for the well-being of their business under these conditions of perceived 'reduced' environmental quality.

8.4 Discussion & Conclusions

8.4.1 Support for the Model of Environmental Enterprise in a Perceived High Quality 'Natural' Environment

The purpose of carrying out this quantitative survey of rural entrepreneurs in Highland Perthshire was to test and verify the observations made and the model developed in chapter 7. In general, at the very basic level of attitude measurement outlined above, the findings of the survey do support, and hence go some way to validating, both the observations and the model, as outlined above. Some examples are given below of the elements of the model that are explored through the survey.

- ***The environment from which the values are extracted comprises the rural milieu in which the entrepreneur operates***

Statements 1-5 focus on measuring the respondents' attitudes towards the 'value' and 'quality' of the rural environment in which their businesses are located. Both the interview and the survey respondent group subscribed strongly to certain 'environmental values' that cluster around ideas of 'natural environments', 'rural lifestyle', and the 'rural ideal'.

- ***Shared values between entrepreneur and market allow these values to be commodified in a suitable tangible form (product or service) and marketed in an appropriate way.***

While the interview data allowed these shared values to be explored in some depth, there was only a limited opportunity to do so through the survey. Statements 10 and 11 both relate closely to this theory, that the customers of environmental businesses value the location of the business, as well as the product or service that they might purchase from that business. Generally they do support the theory, but the information provided is limited to the two statements.

- ***The form of the product or service is frequently post-modern: sign-value takes precedence over use-value.***

This was a difficult theoretical idea to test through the medium of the survey. Good practice in survey design requires that technical jargon is avoided whenever possible, so it was not considered

appropriate to question respondents directly in the terms of the sentence above. Statement 7, which was used to differentiate the respondent groups, touches on this idea, and was intended to identify which respondents were using a post-modern form of enterprise, by measuring their attitudes to using the quality of the 'natural environment' as a tool in their marketing, or other, activities. The quantitative results supported this theory well, and the inclusion of an open-ended question in the survey can provide more details of these activities. The categories of response outlined above match closely with those that emerged from the interview data: a reliance on the various dimensions of rural environmental 'quality' such as the aesthetic appeal, the apparent 'natural-ness' of the location, the chance to experience something intrinsically 'rural' or 'natural', and, importantly, the use of perceived quality in the environment being used to indicate 'quality products' or services (see table 8.4). Again, although a straightforward analysis of the data, it provides broad support for the findings presented in chapter 7.

Table 8.4 Categories of Response to Q7: 'Environmental' values used by entrepreneurs

Response	**Description**	**% Respondents**
Landscape / Wildlife	Respondent uses scenic value and wildlife in advertising material	45%
Outdoor Recreation	Respondent advertises availability of outdoor pursuits	45%
'Rural' Experience	Respondent advertises the 'rural' nature of the location	23%
'Natural Environment'	Respondent advertises the opportunity to experience the 'natural environment'	23%
Peace & Quiet	Respondent advertises the peace and quiet of the study area	21%
'Quality' label	Respondent uses the 'quality' environment to advertise a 'quality' product	19%
Heritage	Respondent advertises the presence of local heritage features	12%

8.3.2 Conclusions

As well as supporting the general observations made regarding respondents' perceptions of value relating to the environment of Highland Perthshire, the findings of the quantitative study can be shown to support certain key elements of the model of environmental enterprise also developed in chapter 7, despite the fairly crude level of measurement used in these Likert-type scaling exercises. This is a reassuring result, which instils more confidence in the validity of the data collected in the qualitative section of this current study. The methodologies of data collection and analysis employed during these two stages of the research has been very different: they are

derived from what might be seen as opposing epistemological standpoints and some researchers might well object to the combination of methodologies as presented here (Taylor 1995). However, where both qualitative and quantitative tools provide mutual confirmation, as above, the researcher's claims for the validity of the findings is enhanced accordingly (Hobson 2000).

A major advantage, both practical and theoretical, of the survey method is that it allows access to a far greater sample population. In the case of the above survey virtually the entire respondent population of the study area could be targeted in a single survey, obviating the need for representative or random sampling schemes. However, when compared to the depth and richness of the data derived from the in-depth, semi structured interviews, and from informal participant observation, the survey data seems somewhat superficial. The development of an appropriate questionnaire is always challenging, requiring various requirements to be juggled to fit within the constraints of a questionnaire that is useable. For the survey presented here, the main challenge was to devise Likert-type statements that adequately represented the ideas being tested, while remaining understandable to the reader, while being sufficiently discriminatory that the results would be of use. Although textbooks can provide various mathematical ways to devise a series of statements, the need to link this with the findings presented in chapter 7 made the practical application of these techniques somewhat problematic. In fact, the pilot testing of the surveys was the most productive way to test the discriminatory power of the various statements as outlined previously. However, even this could not overcome an essential obstacle in this respect. The variability and versatility of the form of rural enterprise was highlighted previously, and in the literature. This made it very difficult to devise a questionnaire that could be equally meaningful to all respondents. Some instances of ambiguous wording did become apparent in the responses. Although these instances were not numerous enough to endanger the overall reliability of the survey, it did indicate the dangers inherent in researching abstract concepts, such as values, perceptions and attitudes, using quantitative techniques alone. Burgess, Harrison & Filius suggest that, "quantitative analyses are not suitable media for discovering feelings and meanings for environment" (1998: 309) and on reflection this would seem to hold true. The survey could not have stood alone as a tool for investigating environmental enterprise in the context of perceived high quality 'natural' environments: face-to-face interviewing is a far more appropriate tool for eliciting personal values and meanings. On the other hand, the survey was able to contact a far broader sample population, and resulted in a wider range of responses, reducing any possible sampling

bias as a result of the guided sampling process practised in the interviews. While the data derived from the survey cannot be said to be statistically significant, the results, such as they are, are generally clear and unambiguous in their support for the model developed previously. On balance, the survey has been a valid and highly relevant part of the overall research study.

CHAPTER NINE

CONCLUSIONS

9.1 Introduction

The subject of rural enterprise has proved to be a rich, stimulating and constantly evolving research area. The initial research questions, outlined in chapter 1, emerged from certain personal and theoretical observations about the nature of environmental values, and 'valuing'. Environmental values were seen to be inherently subjective, highly personal and influenced by many different variables. This led to a questioning of the appropriateness of 'professional' definitions of 'high quality 'natural environments': the criteria used by ecologists and conservation 'professionals' have been shown to be quite different to those used routinely by 'ordinary people' in identifying environmental quality. In examining the contrast between 'professional' and 'ordinary' understandings of environmental quality, influential social constructions affecting broad understandings of 'environment as milieu' and 'The Environment' were examined, such as 'environment as Countryside' and 'environment as Wilderness'. The latter was afforded particular attention, by virtue of its pervasive influence on wider perceptions of environmental quality.

A need was identified to understand how and on what basis 'ordinary people' evaluated 'natural' environments. In chapter 6, social constructions of environmental quality were explored using data collected through interviews. The findings indicated that, as suggested by the literature, 'ordinary' understandings of quality are very different to those of 'professionals'. While the latter focus on a variety of objective methodologies to determine 'scores' for specific aspects of environmental quality, the much softer, subjective understandings of the former are shaped primarily by the specific use they make of the environment. Both groups are attempting to somehow measure how 'good' or otherwise an 'environment' is – but for very different purposes. The 'professional approach is to objectify certain elements of the environment, and to use rigorous techniques to 'measure' them. 'Ordinary' people however, tend to use far softer, fuzzier criteria to determine

'quality' – and this 'quality' is measured in terms of how well the particular 'natural' environment serves the needs of the user. Depending on the primary use of the environment in question, the criteria by which they are judged vary widely and are highly dependent on the social context within which 'use' takes place.

The preliminary research outlined in chapter 6 highlighted the need to be sensitive to the social context within which 'value', 'quality' and 'use' are constructed. It also demonstrated that limiting the research definition of 'high quality natural environments' to specific sites identified by ecologists and conservation groups as being of 'high environmental value' – SSSIs, local and national nature reserves and other designated areas – would not be appropriate. As outlined above, the respondents in the main study are not 'environmental professionals', but they certainly 'value' the 'natural environment' in which they and their business are located. Thus, as the research indicates, they are likely to hold far wider, more diffuse and highly subjective understandings of 'high quality' in rural, 'natural' environments.

It was also observed that rural economies and areas are changing from being zones of primary production, to places where society comes to 'consume' rurality, or nature, or tradition – all intangible and highly subjective sources of value. In chapter 4, the changing nature of production in rural areas was examined in the context of post-modern theory: rather than simply buying products on 'face value', consumers are increasingly participating in the exchange of signs, symbols and images, and the value of these signs outweighs any 'use-value'. The goods produced and traded in rural areas were observed to be increasingly reliant on such intangible sources of value, and the activities of certain rural entrepreneurs in commodifying certain aspects of 'rurality' and the rural environment was noted. In chapter 3, we also noted in Benton's (1995) deconstructionist critique of environmentalism, that a certain social 'cachet' is attributed to products that are seen to be 'environmental'. This ties in with Goodin's 'green value theory' (1994), which holds that 'natural' is valued more highly than 'artificial' or 'man-made'. Thus, 'environmental products' of all kinds are perceived to be both highly valued, and socially desirable, providing a fertile ground for enterprising individuals willing and able to exploit these intangible sources of value. An exploration of social indicators of environmental quality (Chapter 6) suggested that use value is the key to understanding how and why people value environments: such value judgements are guided by the use that the individual makes of the rural environment in question. Thus, symbols of environmental

quality – nature, naturalness, rurality, tradition, heritage, wilderness – can be seen as opportunities for enterprise.

The main body of the research was given over to exploring the actions of environmental entrepreneurs living and working in a perceived high quality environment. Preliminary data analysis indicated that the rural enterprises of the respondents could be differentiated into two groups on the basis of their exploitation of intangible environmental resources. One group, labelled *environmental enterprises*, was seen to rely to a greater extent on the perceived quality of the location in which the business was sited, specifically the 'natural' environment. The nature of the exploitation varied across business sectors (services, retailing, manufacturing / production) and could be identified in terms of the target market, the marketing activities, and in the goods and services offered for consumption by the business. In each of the environmental enterprises, the product, service and / or marketing of the business involved the commodification of environmental values, focusing heavily on the many intangible aspects of socially constructed notions of environmental quality identified previously. By drawing the consumers' attention to the 'rural' or 'natural' nature of the product or service, the enterprise sought to equate these with the perceived quality of the surrounding environment. The other, non-environmental enterprises were labelled as *prosaic enterprises*, to indicate the 'everyday' nature of their business activities. Such businesses traded conventional goods and services, usually to local communities. In contrast to the environmental enterprises, they did not depend on the perceived quality of the environment in which they were located for their business success, with the important exception of the importance of tourist trade to all businesses in the study area.

Having identified the primary categorisation of the enterprises, the next stage was to seek explanatory themes. Paired sets of similar businesses, each owned by a local and in-migrant respectively, were compared and the results examined. It emerged that although the two groups of entrepreneurs might be involved in superficially similar businesses, their individual strategies and motivations were often very different – and these differences were shaped by their respective world-view as a local or in-migrant. As a result, superficially similar businesses were in fact organised and managed in very different ways.

The received wisdom holds that in-migrants to rural areas are more likely to become involved in environmental enterprise type activities than locals, by virtue of their attitudes about the rural environment: such attitudes and beliefs have been shown to drive the process of counter-migration,

by which urban dwellers choose to re-locate to the countryside, in order to benefit from a rural lifestyle. Yet, the data showed that while the environmental enterprises of the respondents were most often established by in-migrants, there were a few locals involved in these businesses. Likewise, the in-migrants also dominated the prosaic enterprises group, though not to the same extent and relatively more locals were found in this group. Although this could be explained by the general over-representation of in-migrants in the sample, it was decided that these unexpected cases should be examined in more detail to probe and further develop explanatory themes relating to the phenomenon of environmental enterprise. Each case was examined in some detail and explanations offered. At an abstract level, the explanation seems to be that while in-migrants may occasionally, for reasons of convenience or as part of an underlying plan, find themselves involved in a prosaic business, they tend to run it in a way that is constantly tending towards more 'environmental' forms of enterprise. Eliza's grocery store was a good example of this. Her original plan to purchase a small hotel and tourist business was thwarted by an unforeseen fire, and the Co-op store she bought was very much a second choice. Yet within the confines of this business she was constantly seeking new ways to mould the business to suit her specific 'in-migrant tastes' – introducing a French bakery line of goods, as well as locally-produced, high-value food goods to supplement the more prosaic toilet rolls and baked beans. Through this, the business was becoming more to her taste, and from a research point of view, more fitting with her in-migrant status. Chris provided another good example of this, through his 'housecraft' business. In comparison with Gordon, a local builder, he has no desire to grow the business in any meaningful way. He concentrates on restoration – rather than construction – work, and uses 'symbols of nature' in his marketing material, which also emphasised the 'traditional' and 'heritage' aspects of his business. So while Chris' business is quite prosaic in nature, his methods of marketing and his whole motivation are concurrent with those of other in-migrants, who establish outright environmental enterprises: an emphasising of the 'rural' nature of the business, and the connotations with 'traditional quality' that this entails.

The analysis of the data, as summarised above, was used to develop a model of environmental enterprise in a perceived high quality environment. The model emphasises the post-modern nature of environmental enterprise, and also highlights the inherently subjective nature of such enterprises. They are shown to be the outcome of a combination of environmental, and other, values, and the personal assets of the individual entrepreneur (finance, property, skills and experience): each combination, and hence each enterprise, is unique to each individual

entrepreneur. The key to environmental enterprise, which distinguishes it from more prosaic forms of enterprise, was shown to be the ability of the entrepreneur to recognise, commodify and market intangible environmental values in a form that is recognisable to the potential consumer of the environmental product or service. Thus intangible values are converted to tangible goods and services by environmental entrepreneurs, operating in a location that is widely perceived to be a high quality 'natural' environment.

9.2 The Contribution of the Research

This study has examined the phenomenon of environmental enterprise from several perspectives, and in doing so has attempted to contribute to the body of entrepreneurial knowledge and understanding by relating this to rural enterprise and the experiences of rural entrepreneurs. The contribution of the study to scholarly knowledge has been the development of a model of environmental enterprise that has been inductively created from the actual experience of environmental entrepreneurs. The model contributes to the further development of understanding in a field that is of increasing significance in the wider field of rural development.

The particular value of the model presented here is that it sets enterprise in its social context, and recognises the variations that occur within enterprise. As such, it takes account not only of the variables relating to individual entrepreneurs, but also of the influence of wider, socially constructed ideas about the environment, and sources of value found within specific socially constructed 'environments'. The model demonstrates the importance of socially constructed notions of environmental quality, which are based on intangible environmental values relating to rural and 'natural' environments. By emphasising the existence of these values, the model provides a explanation of environmental enterprise.

While the model may not offer any prescriptive or predictive theories about the nature of rural enterprise, it has illustrated the growing importance of intangible sources of value to rural entrepreneurs, and outlines the ways in which such individuals currently recognise and exploit such values. The model does provide some level of explanatory power about the types of business founded in the context of 'perceived high quality environments', the style of the businesses and the attraction of certain individuals to these entrepreneurial opportunities. Through the development of a broader and deeper understanding of how rural and environmental enterprise works, it allows us

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environmental enterprises, such as specialist food producers, craft production, and specialist retail enterprises –all of which are firmly rooted in the 'natural environment' in which they are located – is considerable, relative to the local population. The very success of such businesses within the study area speaks for itself. Some respondents, such as Laura (potter), Greg (housecrafts), and the artists chose to deliberately restrict the amount of business they did purely for their own lifestyle reasons – certainly not because there was a lack of opportunity for growth. Similarly, those that have chosen to expand – the smokeries, specialist retailers, outdoor recreation providers, tourism service providers – have and are doing so successfully. These entrepreneurs have successfully sold 'the environment' to their customers: it is the ones who do not, and don't have the benefit of other options (prosaic businesses) who fail, such as Richard, who claimed "*you can't live on scenery*", and has indeed failed to do so. Importantly, the kinds of people who set up environmental enterprises in these post-modern times are far from the 'hippy, good lifers' so often caricatured as the proponents of 'lifestyle businesses'. Far from it: the environmental entrepreneurs encountered in this study were, by and large, keen businessmen and women, well aware that 'green is good' when it comes to exploiting the intangible resources that are tied up in their chosen business location. With the popularisation of environmental values throughout the population at large, courtesy of increasing environmental education programmes and the vociferous actions of environmental organisations, one could say that we are now all 'environmentalists', in that we have been taught to at least recognise 'nature' when we see it – and to value it as 'a Good Thing'. As long as environmental values, 'green value' as Goodin (1995) would have it, continues to spread and evolve throughout the population, so too the potential market for environmental products develops.

Yet environmental values of this kind can only act as 'resources' as long as the integrity of the environment is maintained – at least as it is perceived by wider society. The 'bundle of values' relating to rural and 'natural' areas exist mainly as socially constructed, strongly anti-industrial notions. The point is that these businesses succeed by virtue of the perceptions of wider society: as the recent Foot and Mouth crisis showed, even these deeply held understandings of environmental quality can be modified and, at worst, lost entirely. When this happens, business based on such intangible values could find their claims of 'natural-ness' and 'quality', and the security of their enterprise, somewhat compromised. Similarly, while many of the small business in this study have been specialist producers of food good, the immediate future of agriculture in the UK seems to be one of continuing mechanisation and industrialisation. This is a paradoxical

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certain level of resentment and hostility towards the agency involved, as a result. The broad theoretical implication is that although values, and socially constructed notions of quality, are difficult to research and nigh on impossible to reduce to objective levels of definition, they must be accounted for in some way: to neglect them is to risk conducting research that is irrelevant out with a narrowly 'professional' frame of reference.

9.3.3 Limitations of the Study & Suggestions for Further Research

The research presented in this thesis aimed to explore and understand the actions of rural entrepreneurs within a particular context – that of perceived environmental quality. By virtue of both the research area, and the methodology adopted, certain limitations can be seen to exist in relation to the thesis. Firstly, qualitative methodologies – as discussed in chapters 2 and 5 – cannot be said to 'prove' theory. They can only tell a convincing story, and provide an appropriate explanation of behaviour in context. For this reason, the generalisability of the research may be limited, in that the observations and theorising of the researcher may have emerged as a result of particular local circumstances – producing an analysis that may not apply in the wider context. The only way to test the generalisability of this thesis would be to attempt to apply the model presented in chapter 7 in other environmental contexts – such as areas that are less accessible, or conversely, more developed, and to make some judgement as to how well it represented an explanation of entrepreneurial action in those contrasting contexts. Without anticipating the results of such explorations, however, it is likely that while the local environmental conditions (and hence their perceived quality or value) may vary, the model will remain valid as an explanation of the actions of environmental entrepreneurs, as they are defined here.

An interesting direction for future research would be that identified by Mitchell (1998), in her examination of the process of 'Creative Destruction' (*pace* Schumpter) as it occurs in rural 'heritage' villages in America. She recounts the process of post-modern commodification as it occurs in small rural towns, beginning with small rural businesses and gradually expanding to encompass the whole setting. In the process of expansion, the rural village or town itself expands, and eventually becomes a 'pastiche' of its original self. The lifestyle and 'quality of life' that drew people to value the location in the first instance becomes lost in a welter of insensitive development

('Heritage Malls') and overcrowding by tourists and other visitors. Thus the very reasons for visiting the region are lost. It would be interesting – and informative – to examine this phenomenon in rural Scotland, particularly in the more accessible and highly visited areas such as Perthshire. Many respondents made the point that while one could purchase a whole range of knitted woollen goods, jewellery and fancy gifts in the main town of Pitlochry, it was not always possible to buy a bag of reasonably priced groceries. Similarly, during the summer at the height of the tourist season it is very difficult for 'normal' life to proceed in the town centre, dominated as it is by tourist coaches and day-trippers, yet during the winter the town lies empty and jobs are scarce. Mitchell concludes that the process of 'Creative Destruction' in America is driven by the post-modern commodification of the 'rural ideal', in very similar ways as perceived environmental quality is exploited by the entrepreneurs of this current study. It would be useful, particularly in the light of ongoing National Park debates, to ascertain whether the process and effects of the cycle of 'Creative Destruction' identified by Mitchell, are a possible consequence of pursuing such a form of rural development in Scotland. One of the limitations of research carried out within the constraints of a PhD thesis are the time limits that are imposed, and a longitudinal approach such as Mitchell's outlined above, is not possible.

There is one final point to be made regarding the limitations of the research. To date, sustainable development studies have been dominated by quantitative forms of research: unsurprising perhaps, as policy makers routinely demand 'hard' evidence to support and justify their policy choices. This thesis does not contribute much in the way of 'hard data' (not does it seek to) – but what it does do is increase our understanding of how rural places, and the people within them, operate. It highlights the importance of environmental quality to certain forms of rural enterprise, and thus has implications for the future regeneration of rural areas. It demonstrates clearly the direct importance of environmental quality in rural areas, as it is perceived by people. As rural issues – from land ownership to renewable energy, from environmental protection to farming subsidies – are currently being debated and examined by the Parliament, the Executive and innumerable interest groups and agencies throughout the region, it can only be of benefit to all that all forms of knowledge and understanding are bent to the task of regenerating and repopulating Rural Scotland.

9.4 Closing Reflections on the Study

The undertaking of this thesis has been something of a personal, as well as an academic journey. It has provided an opportunity to explore issues and ideas that lay out of reach during undergraduate days, and the nagging feeling that surely there was something more to understanding 'the environment' than species counts and habitat surveys. As with most 'professional' languages, the rigorous scientific terms used in ecological studies cannot be easily communicated to 'ordinary people', and conversations about 'saving the world' were limited to cosy post-lecture pub sessions with others who spoke the same language. A human ecology lecture proved to be something of a turning point, revealing the existence of an area of study that focused on how things actually are for people – rather than trying to pin down the non-human world, and demanding that people 'value' it, irrespective of the way they actually feel about the place in question. This thesis provided an opportunity to examine how people 'feel' about environments, and demonstrated that they do not generally talk in terms of species richness or biodiversity. They talk in terms of the feelings inspired by 'environments', and they value such places as inspire the strongest of these emotions. Importantly, their perceptions of 'environmental value' are intimately tied into their own relationship with the environment in question, most often by virtue of their use of that environment. It is encouraging to see that this point has been acknowledged to some extent by the conservation agencies, who are increasingly attempting to take such attitudes and values into account in their policy making and other activities.

This thesis would not exist were it not for the co-operation and enthusiasm of the respondents. Their commitment to their enterprises and their deep appreciation for the place in which they have opted to 'take their chances' made the interviewing sessions the highlight of the research itself. The sheer variety of human enterprise that was displayed by the entrepreneurs enriched the research experience immeasurably, and it is my hope that the time and the effort they put in to telling me about their lives has provided a useful tool for those who seek to understand the phenomenon of rural enterprise.

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APPENDIX 1

Questionnaire 1 (Chapter 6)

Questionnaire 2 (Chapter 8)

QUESTIONNAIRE 1 (CHAPTER 6)

What is a High Quality Rural Environment?

How do you identify a High Quality Rural Environment?

1. Describe in your own words what a high quality rural environment is. Outline the important features of a high quality rural environment.

2. Name a place you know of which fits the description given above.

   Why have you chosen this place?

3. How important are the following criteria to you, in relation to the quality of the rural environment? Please rank in order of importance from 1 (most important) to 14 (least important).

Basic facilities (toilets and carparks)	
Opportunities to view native wildlife in its natural habitat	
Clean, unpolluted air, water and soil	
Ease of physical access	
Opportunities for active outdoor recreation	
Visitor attractions	
Number of other visitors likely to be at the site, at the same time	
Designated nature conservation areas e.g. SSSIs, RSPB, NT Reserves	
Opportunities for informal recreation	
Ease of legal access i.e. whether landowner allows public access	
Presence of shops, cafes, and hotels	
Peace and quiet	
Level or physical development	
Other	

4. Describe the use that you make of high quality rural environments.

Leisure / informal recreation	
Wildlife / Bird watching	
Tourism / Visitor	
Place where you make a living	
Place where you live	
Other	

5. In your opinion are there any changes or event that would spoil or reduce the quality of a rural environment such as the one described previously?

6. Where do you live? Would you describe it as rural or urban?

7. Age and Occupation

QUESTIONNAIRE 2 (CHAPTER 8)

Please read each of the following statements carefully and decide whether you strongly agree, agree, disagree, or strongly disagree with each one. Please circle the number that correlates with your answer, as below:

1 = strongly agree 2 = agree slightly 3 = disagree slightly 4 = strongly disagree

1. The environment of Highland Perthshire can be described as a 'high quality rural environment'

1 2 3 4

2. The environment of Highland Perthshire can be described as a natural environment.

1 2 3 4

3. The quality of the 'natural environment' plays an important role in the quality of my life.

1 2 3 4

4. When deciding to live in Highland Perthshire the quality of the natural environment was an important consideration.

1 2 3 4

5. I choose to live in Highland Perthshire for personal reasons, irrespective of its suitability as a business location.

1 2 3 4

6. Highland Perthshire provides a satisfactory location for my business.

1 2 3 4

Please give reasons for your answer to Question 6.

7. My type of business belongs in the countryside – it couldn't operate as successfully in an urban location.

1 2 3 4

Please give reasons for your answer to Question 7.

8. The quality of the natural environment in which my business is located can be used as a positive marketing tool for my product / service.

1 2 3 4

Please give reasons for your answer to Question 8. For example, what aspects of the local environment do you make use of?

9. The presence of tourists / visitors to the Highland Perthshire are directly affects the success of my business.

1 2 3 4

10. My customers would still use my business if I was located in a different environment, such as an urban location.

1 2 3 4

11. My customers value the fact that my business is located in a high quality rural environment.

1 2 3 4

12. A large scale physical development (such as a quarry or a housing development) in the immediate location of my business would not affect the success of my business to any great extent.

1 2 3 4

Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire.

PAGE

MISSING

IN

ORIGINAL

	Name	L/I	F/M	Type of Business	Previous	Form of Business	Market	Niche
1	Jackie	I	F	Jewellery manufacture & sales*	Employee	Craft / cultural retail	N	Tourism
2	James	I	M	Organic & wholefood sales	Video rental business	Unconventional trading	N, L	Tourism, some local needs
3	Charles	I	M	Guest house	Employee	Service	N	Tourism
4	Neil	I	M	Mountain bike hire & sales	Employee	Experiential, trading	N	Tourism, retail
5	Mary	I	F	Senior ranger**	Student	Experiential, cultural	N	Tourism
6	Jenny	I	F	Guest house (vegetarian)	Housewife	Service	N	Tourism
7	Eileen	L	F	Camping & Caravanning Site	Family business	Service	N	Tourism
8	Jean	I	F	2nd Hand Bookshop	Management consultant	Unconventional retail	N, L	Tourism, local need
9	Elisa	I	F	Village grocery store	Civil servant	Conventional retail	L, N	Local, some tourism
10	Linda	L	F	Outdoor Clothing store	Employee	Conventional retail	N, L	Tourism, some local
11	Richard	I	M	Computer services	IT consultant (failed)	Service	L, N	Local, some tourism
12	Kate	I	F	Pottery production & sales	None	Craft cultural, retail	N	Tourism
13	Margaret	L	F	Transport & taxi services	Family business	Conventional servicing	L, N	Basic local need, some tourism
14	Ross	L	M	Game processing services	Employee	Unconventional service	N	Advanced specialist need
15	Max	I	M	Wildlife artist	Employee	Craft cultural, retail	N, L	Specialist skills
16	Michael	L	M	Architect	Family business	Conventional service	L, N	Advanced local need
17	David	I	M	Smokery (manufacturing / food production)	Family business	Unconventional production	N	Specialist
18	Tim	I	M	Project Management consultancy	Employee	Service	Global	Specialist skills
19	Gordon	L	M	Building services	Self-employed	Conventional service	L	Basic local need
20	Dave	I	M	Village grocery store	Employee	Conventional service	L, N	Basic local need, some tourism
21	Alex	I	M	Wildlife artist, with gallery	Freelance	Craft cultural, unconventional retail	N, L	Tourism, advanced local need

	Name	L/I	F/M	Type of Business	Previous	Form of Business	Market	Niche
22	James	I	M	Diving school	Employee	Experiential	N, L	Tourism, some local
23	John	L	M	Garden center & landscaping services, tea shop	Family business	Conventional service	L	Basic local need, some tourism
24	Susan	L	F	Organic farm shop & tearoom	None	Unconventional service	L, N	Advanced local need, some tourism
25	Lynn	I	F	Whisky distillery & tourist attraction*	Employee	Experiential, unconventional production & retail	N	Tourism
26	Greg	I	M	Building restoration	Employee	Craft, service	L	Local need
27	Robert	I	M	Self-catering Cottage	Employee	Servicing, cultural	N	Tourism
28	Ellie	I	F	Backpacker Hostel	None	Servicing, cultural	N	Tourism
29	Sarah	I	F	Training services	Employee	Unconventional service	L	Advanced local need
30	Andrew	L	M	Deer farm & campsite	Farmer	Production, service	N	Tourism
31	Beth	I	F	Cooking Agency	Freelance	Unconventional service	N, L	Specialist tourism
32	Colin	L	M	Boat hire & fishing trips	Family business	Experiential	N	Tourism
33	Kerr	I	M	Pottery production & sales	Employee (retired)	Craft cultural, experiential, retail	N, L	Tourism, some local needs
34	Murdo	L	M	Mountain bike hire	Policeman (retired)	Experiential	N	Tourism
35	Roddy	I	M	Whitewater rafting trips	Royal Navy	Experiential	N	Tourism, specialist activity
36	Henry	I	M	Guided tours: spiritual & religious sites	Writer	Experiential, cultural	N	Special interest
37	Joy	I	F	Shiatsu massage & therapies	None	Unconventional service	N, L	Tourism, some local
38	Norman	I	M	Media consultancy	Journalist	Unconventional service	N, L	Specialist skills, some local campaigns
39	Bill	L	M	Mountain & wildlife tours	Gamekeeper	Experiential	N	Tourism
40	Helen	I	F	Decorative metalwork, traditional smithy	Freelance artist	Craft cultural, experiential	N	Specialist arts, some tourism
41	Gordon	I	M	Mixed estate – tourist accommodation, forestry, fishing, shooting	Family business	Experiential, unconventional service	N	Specialist tourism activities
42	George	L	M	Deer farm & smokery	Farmer	Unconventional production,	L/N	Tourism, specialist

	Name	L/I	F/M	Type of Business	Previous	Form of Business	Market	Niche
43	Fay	I	F	Luxury leather & cashmere goods production & sales	Freelance designer	Unconventional production & sales	N	Tourism, luxury market
44	Janet	I	F	Farmstay – B&B	Employee	Service, experiential	N	Tourism
45	Harry	I	M	Luxury goods retail*	Employee	Conventional retail	N, L	Tourism, some local need
46	Allan	I	M	Sub-post office, retail, teashop	Self-employed	Conventional retail & service	L	Basic local need
47	Donald	I	M	Native seed supply, wildflower nursery	Self-employed	Unconventional service & retail	N	Specialist need
48	Doreen	I	F	Environmental consultancy	Consultant	Unconventional service	N, Global	Advanced specialist need
49	Graham	I	M	Outdoor training consultancy, mountain tour guide	Employee	Unconventional service, experiential	N	Specialist needs, some tourism
50	Calum	I	M	Wildlife safaris	Farmer	Experiential	N	Tourism

L = Local, I = In-migrant; F = Female, M = Male; L = Local, N = National
*Manager (not owner)
**Manager of environmental centre owned by commercial estate

APPENDIX 3

The Environmental Enterprises: Business Form and Commodification of Environmental Values

The Environmental Enterprises: Business Form and Valorisation of Environmental Values

No	Name	Business	Form of Business Product / Service	(Environmental) Values commodified through the Entrepreneurial Process
1	Jackie	Jewellery manufacture and sales	'Hand-made' jewellery, icon of 'scottishness'	'Scottishness' of the surrounding physical environment
2	James	Wholefoods store	Organic and wholefood products, a symbol of a healthy lifestyle	Naturalness, health and well-being, being 'green'
3	Charles	Guest house	Basic tourist accommodation service	Aesthetic and rural
4	Neil	Mountain bike hire, sales and repair	Selling access to and an experience of the environment through activity, local information	Remoteness, wilderness
5	Mary	Senior ranger	Advanced tourist service, environmental information	Scientific values, ecological importance
6	Jenny	Vegetarian guest house	Basic tourist accommodation service	Naturalness, health and well-being
7	Eileen	Camping and caravan site	Basic tourist accommodation service	Naturalness, peace and quiet
8	Kate	Pottery production and sales	Hand-crafted pottery works	Rurality, high quality
9	Max	Wildlife artist	Paintings of local wildlife and landscapes	Native wildlife, natural habitats, wilderness, pristine environment, aesthetic appeal
10	David	Smokery, production and sales	High quality smoked venison products	Quality, traditional production, rurality, pristine environment
11	Alex	Wildlife artist, gallery	Paintings of local wildlife and landscapes	Native wildlife, natural habitats, wilderness, pristine environment, aesthetic appeal
12	James	Scuba diving school	Selling experience of the environment through activity	Nature, wildlife
13	Susan	Organic farm shop	Organic, locally produced products, experience of visiting a working organic farm	Natural production, health and well being, being 'green'
14	Lynn	Whisky distillery / visitor centre	A 'visitor experience' touring a working distillery	Natural, traditional production, rural lifestyle
15	Robert	Self-catering cottage	Basic tourist accommodation service, remote location	Remoteness, isolation, peace and quiet, naturalness, simplicity
16	Ellie	Backpackers hostel	Basic tourist accommodation service	Aesthetic quality, accessible rurality
17	Andrew	Deer farm and campsite	Basic accommodation and selling experience of local environment and rural lifestyle	Naturalness, contact with wildlife and farmed animals, remoteness, traditional rural living

No	Name	Business	Form of Business Product / Service	(Environmental) Values commodified through the Entrepreneurial Process
18	Colin	Boat hire	Selling experience of the environment through activity	Aesthetic quality, peace and quiet
19	Kerr	Pottery craft and sales	Pottery products as icons of a rural living	Remoteness, tradition, simple lifestyle, peace and quiet
20	Murdo	Mountain bike hire	Selling access to and an experience of the environment through activity	Wildlife and natural habitats, aesthetic beauty, peace and quiet
21	Roddy	Rafting trips	Selling an experience of the environment through activity	Aesthetic beauty, wildness, mysteriousness, elemental.
22	Henry	Tours of religious sites, lectures	Selling knowledge, through expert status	Landscape as heritage and tradition, natural mysteries
23	Bill	Mountain tour guide	Selling knowledge and an experience of the environment	Aesthetic beauty, wildlife and natural habitats, adventure and challenge, remoteness
24	Helen	Smithy, decorative and traditional	Craft products as icons of rurality	Traditional production, rural living
25	Gordon	Estate – forestry, farming, tourism etc	Basic tourist accommodation on a working estate	Traditional rural living, aesthetic beauty, 'working' and 'living' environment
26	George	Deer farm and smokery	Quality smoked venison products	Traditional production, pristine environment, naturalness
27	Fay	Luxury goods manuf and sales	Luxury textiles and other goods	Quality, environmental integrity, Scottishness, beauty
28	Janet	Farm stay, B&B	Basic tourist accommodation and selling experience of farming life	Remoteness, peace and quiet, aesthetic beauty, traditional rural living
29	Harry	Textiles, luxury goods sales	Selling a 'shopping experience', luxury textiles and food goods	Quality and environmental integrity, naturalness, local heritage and tradition
30	Donald	Native seed supply, wildflower nursery	Expert skills and professional services, and native wildflowers	Naturalness, native species and habitats, environmental integrity
31	Graham	Outdoor activities training, cake decoration, building!	Expert skills and professional training	Challenge, remoteness, wilderness, naturalness
32	Calum	Wildlife safaris by 4x4	Selling an experience of the environment through activity	Wilderess, nature and naturalness, remoteness, ecological integrity